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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

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FROGGA ON FIRE



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NEWS**

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FACTS**

EVERY WEEK



Editorial

POINT ONE

A recent article in a well respected Sunday newspaper, here in Sydney, had none other than George Negus answering a few well chosen questions.

One answer needs serious looking at.

What are you watching? "I'm watching a lot of cricket as there's no Soccer on," came the reply.

Whoa!

Back the truck up a minute please.

No TV soccer? It's probably best to have a look at some of the possible reasons for such a response:

1/ The questions were asked during the winter months when there wasn't any soccer, apart from State Leagues (?), going on in Australia.

Ah yes, but cricket isn't

played here then either so that can't be the answer, whatever was I thinking of?

2/ During the winter months, Mr Negus could have been watching the cricket on the TV, there's always some going on somewhere in the world after all.

3/ If the question of 'What are you watching' was posed some months ago, whatever was the publication thinking of?

Surely someone must have realised that the soccer season was underway

here and that going to press with an item that MAY have been some weeks/months old would cause some discomfort and, perhaps, some embarrassment for our Soccer Australia official.

I cannot believe that Mr

Negus would make such a statement at this particular time and, as happens with all good publications and in all walks of life, a misguided, but honest, error was made.

If this wasn't the case, where would that leave our Board member and well respected journalist, in terms of his standing within the soccer community?

No this is not meant to 'bag' George Negus nor the publication in question. It is only asking WHY the article was published when it was and WHY nothing was forthcoming from Soccer Australia to clarify the situation, which has raised many eyebrows and debate around the grounds.

POINT TWO

The results of the 'Oceania Player of the Year' award have been announced and the winner this time, by a wide margin, is none other than Australia's own Mark Bosnich.

Stan Lazaridis came in second, along with Christian

Karembeu (New Caledonia) and Robbie Slater was positioned in fourth.

The 'Oceania Player of the

Decade' (1988-98) has been lifted by Wynton Rufer (New Zealand), who wins ahead of Robbie Slater.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Mark Bosnich	Australia	68
Stan Lazaridis	Australia	45
Christian Karembeu	New Caledonia	45
Robbie Slater	Australia	39
Craig Foster	Australia	34
Aurelio Vidmar	Australia	28
Alex Tobin	Australia	25
Harry Kewell	Australia	18
Mark Viduka	Australia	16
Batram Suri	Solomon Islands	14



PLAYER OF THE DECADE

Wynton Rufer	New Zealand	68
Robbie Slater	Australia	47
Pascal Vahirua	Tahiti	38
Chris Karembeu	New Caledonia	38

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NSW STATE LEAGUE Div. 2

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NORTHERN SPIRIT INTO 1998-99 LEAGUE?

By John Economos

NORTHERN SPIRIT, the Sydney based consortium representing an intended team from the northern shores of Sydney Harbour, is almost certain to be admitted into the National Soccer League next season despite deliberations from Soccer Australia over the weekend.

Following Board meetings held last Saturday, Soccer Australia sent out a communique stating that the Board of Commissioners had met to consider two Sydney based bids for entry into the National Soccer League, those from the Manly Warringah Sea Hawks and the Northern Spirit.

Only one of the two Sydney bids will gain entry into the National Soccer League.

The communique went on to state that the Board of Soccer Australia will bring down its decision within a fortnight.

However it's almost certain that the Northern Spirit consortium, headed up by the former head of the NSW Housing Industry, Mr Remo Nogarotto, will ultimately edge out their rivals the Sea Hawks.

Last Sunday at a second meeting, Mr Nogarotto met with Mr Woolley and Mr Kamasz from Soccer Australia.

But Soccer Australia emphasised that no decision will be made for another two weeks.

ABSW believes the Northern Spirit has almost won the race for entry, but such a deliberation for a final decision has been brought about because of three major stumbling blocks placed in the path of Northern Spirit's entry bid.

Firstly Soccer Australia is not too fond of the idea that the Northern Spirit wants to use North Sydney Oval as its

home-ground because the arena embraces cricket pitches.

This obstacle can, and will easily be overcome, because of some very modern technology that the Spirit will have access to.

It is also believed that Soccer Australia had demanded a very substantial (six figure) cash bond be lodged with its office to explicitly demonstrate good faith, guarantee the Club's longevity for at least five years and thus avoid the ludicrous debacle experienced last season following Collingwood's ill-planned entry and then ultimate demise.

Since last Saturday however, ABSW believes that Soccer Australia had modified such a large cash sum be lodged, and was watered down to incorporate that some bank guarantees be fixed in place.

A third and highly confidential, yet also very strange demand, was Soccer Australia's expressed desire that a specifically nominated candidate by them, be in fact installed on the Board of Directors of Northern Spirit.

This specifically nominated candidate is currently and heavily involved with the consortium of rival bidders,



David Woolley: C.E.O. of Soccer Australia.



David Hill: Soccer Australia.

the Manly Warringah Sea Hawks.

The Northern Spirit is believed to have already contacted many Australian players and two high profiled coaches now based overseas to consider their return to Australia and continue their Soccer careers on a full-time basis with the new Sydney club.

One such player believed to

be interested is Canary Island based Aurelio Vidmar, registered in the Spanish league with club side Tenerife.

Soccer Australia's Chairman Mr David Hill, stated: "On record there are a number of issues still to be clarified and quickly. Both have submitted very impressive professional bids and they have the potential to make strong contributions to Australian Soccer."

Soccer Australia's C.E.O. Mr David Woolley and the National League's General manager Mr Stefan Kamasz, will fly this week across to New Zealand to have further investigative meetings with yet another consortium based in Auckland.

This consortium has already forwarded to Soccer Australia an official bid on behalf of the Auckland Kings to be admitted into our National League next season.

A most vexing question for all club officials and players concerned, both current and new, is whether the League is to be expanded by two new entries, decreased by two, or in fact remain as is.

PABLO CARDOZO WALTZES OFF TO AUSTRIA

By John Economos

PABLO CARDOZO, the Ericsson League's and Adelaide Sharks' 25 year old top goalscorer flies out for Austria, Vienna in fact, on Saturday on a three month loan deal.

The ball-playing ace-goalscorer will immediately join crack outfit Rapid Vienna in the Austrian first division, with his Adelaide club collecting a lucrative \$50,000 loan-fee.

Should Rapid Vienna then desire to retain Cardozo at the end of the three months, the Adelaide Sharks will collect a further \$100,000.

Last Sunday night at the Hindmarsh Stadium, the quietly spoken Cardozo celebrated his new Austrian contract by scoring yet another two goals that helped the Sharks defeat Newcastle Breakers 3-1.

His second goal scored well into stoppage time was a real cracker.

A rising 20 metre drive ripped into the top right corner of the target and already has been rated one of the 'classics' for this season.

Cardozo's 'double' not only assured the Sharks of their sixth win of the season, but simultaneously stretched his lead at the top of the goalscoring chart in Ericsson League. He has now scored 13

goals to pull away from nearest rival international striker Damian Mori who failed to score for Adelaide City on Sunday against Wollongong City.

Cardozo has now scored a massive 41 goals for the Sharks to shatter the previously longstanding Club record set by retired striker Graham Honeyman who had scored 36.

ABSW late last night contacted Cardozo on his car phone in Adelaide from where



he stated: "The Austrians wanted me over there by Tuesday (today).

"Of course I was most excited but I told them that I wanted to stay a few more days in Australia so I could play against our city rivals Adelaide City tomorrow night (Wednesday).

"I then fly to Sydney to see my parents and 10 year old brother Ricardo for a day or so, then take off on Saturday."

It's almost certain that despite Rapid Vienna securing

Cardozo on a loan deal for three months, they will ultimately buy out his remaining contract from the Sharks for a set fee of \$100,000.

"Rapid Vienna appear keen to get me as they made it clear that they don't want me over there just for trials. I think they have a Yugoslav coach whom I'm told is very highly respected in Europe."

Highly skilled, Cardozo started with Sydney City's Under 13s and 14s before moving across to join the Canterbury Juniors.

Whilst still 15, Sydney Olympic snapped Pablo up and two years later he made his debut into the NSL for Olympic at the St George Stadium against visiting Victorian side Sunshine George Cross.

Pablo during the last off season desperately desired to return to Sydney and rejoin his family.

But despite offering his services to Sydney Olympic (who had originally sold him to Adelaide for \$25,000 four years ago), Olympic hesitated on a paltry \$10,000 fee being demanded by Adelaide.

In last Sunday's clash with Newcastle, Cardozo set yet a second Club record, playing his 150th game for the Sharks to overtake the previous record set by dynamic goalscoring midfielder Neil Gaffney.



Pablo Cardozo seen here with vivacious blonde 27 year old Sydney promotional model, Ms Rachel Rowland.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC'S 'D-DAY' NEARING

By John Economos

SYDNEY OLYMPIC's successful predator has until this Friday (January 16) to lodge its official takeover offer and terms with a firm of Sydney solicitors appointed by the Club's members.

In a national advertising campaign made in a prominent Australian financial paper, tenders have been invited to submit their formal takeover bids for one of Australia's largest Soccer crowd pullers. And 'D-Day' is this coming Friday.

A Sydney Olympic spokesman stated to ABSW last night: "It has been a turbulent period of some weeks recently for our Club.

"At this stage we have two identified bidders in former stockbroker Rene Rivkin and another syndicate headed up by Sydney businessman Mr Nick Politis (managing director of City Ford and

president of Eastern Suburbs Rugby Leagues Club).

Mr Politis' syndicate is made up by multi millionaires Mr Nick Balagiannis (former owner of Australia's second largest poker-machine manufacturer-Olympic Videos), plus property developers Mr George Drivas and Mr Jim Lepouris," explained the club's spokesman.

ABSW understands that Rene Rivkin has already made an amended offer with a complicated cash package totalling some \$1.68 million to takeover the 1990 NSL champions and twice National League Cup winners.

Rivkin however still has until Friday to up his bid should he feel that his current offer is under threat. In recent weeks the flamboyant, cigar-chomping money-maker has already upped his bid by some \$260,000.

Meanwhile the Politis syndicate has still not submitted its final bid and ABSW is informed that it won't be forwarded until Friday's 5pm deadline.



Rene Rivkin: One of Olympic's predators.

NNSW AWARDS NIGHT

By ABSW

There were several highlights at the Annual General Meeting of the Northern NSW Soccer Federation Ltd held at their Hexham, (Newcastle) headquarters in December last year.

Some outstanding reports were tabled by President Bill Walker, General Manager Garry Screen, Coaching and Development Manager Ken Kaiser, Women's ITC Mark Jones and the Council of Associations' very own David Jennings.

As NNSW enters 1998, its assets reached upwards of \$700,000 which, compared to 1988 when it was a mere \$23,000, shows great progress forward. This is a remarkable figure, but it certainly covers any contingency related to loss of sponsorship or Pools' money in the near future.

More importantly, it consolidates policies already operating and will help to develop business plans with a far greater degree of certainty.

This is clearly shown by the plan to appoint an 'Education Officer' this year who will be responsible for the development and delivery of programs in club management (including the responsibilities of club officers, financial control, litigation and media relations etc.), at the grass roots level of soccer. It was further suggested that this may be a first for Australian soccer and, indeed, for any sport in this country.

NNSW now has the referees amalgamated and a commission set-up, consisting of: Steven Screen, Rob Davies, Rodney Minter, John Caban, Tim Diment and a tireless worker by the name of Greg Harris.

Life member and patron, Richard Face, the Member for Charlestown and Minister for Gaming and Racing, was commended for his twenty-five years in State Parliament and his contribution to NNSW Soccer.

Under the inspirational leadership of Ken Kaiser, coaching and development has achieved new heights (this was accomplished despite the tragedy of Ken losing his son in a mining accident).

The Federation and Newcastle Topper Breakers have a stronger working relationship in conjunction with the Talent Identification Program.

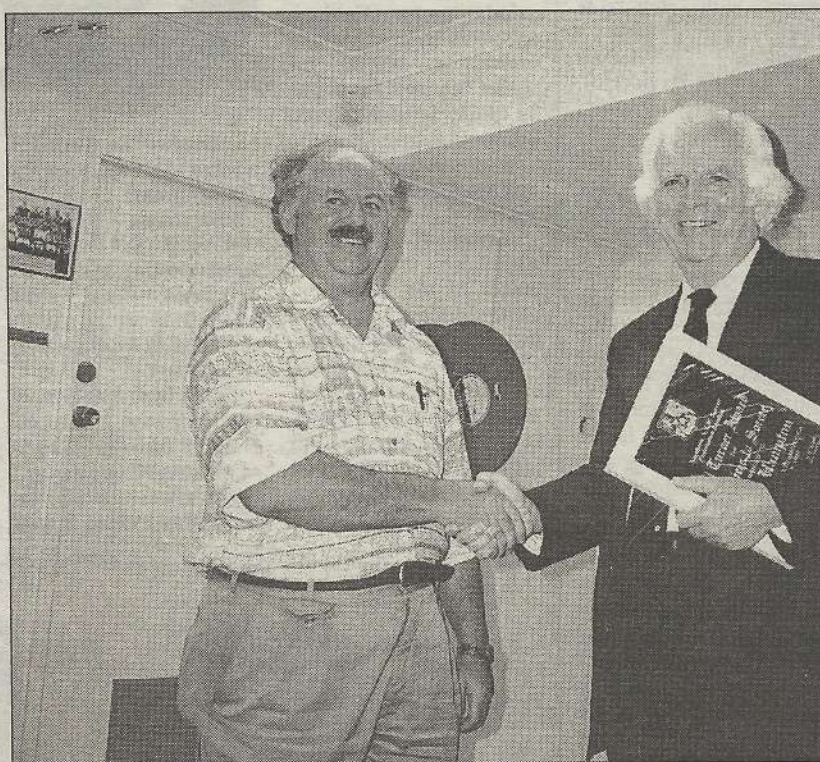
Academies have been conducted throughout the northern area of the state and numerous people have gained their coaching credentials at various levels. For example, Mark Ambler (North Coast), Michael Boogaard (Northern Inland) and Bruce Tracey (Hunter Region) have all greatly assisted and 225 schools were visited with 23,459 students receiving coaching by accredited coaches (something sorely lacking in all honesty Ed.).



Ken Kaiser (r), Coaching and Development Officer receives his Life Membership plaque from the Northern NSW Soccer Federation President, Bill Walker, during the Annual General Meeting held in December last year.



Bill Bobbins of Raymond Terrace receives his 'Service to Soccer' Award from Bill Turner.



Alan Hampson from Grafton is seen here receiving the 'Bill Turner - Service to Soccer' Award from the man after whom it is named.



Paul Trisley (r) a highly respected solicitor from Newcastle receives his Life Membership Award from the President of the Northern NSW Soccer Federation at the 1997 Annual General Meeting held on December 7.



Computer whiz and Australian Soccer star, Tracey McGovern, preparing the Handbook for the 1998 Topper Bill Turner Cup at the Hexham Office of the Northern NSW Soccer Federation.

Women's soccer has continued to be enormously successful in administration and playing strength. In the current national side, about one third of the players hail from the NNSW area and, for the first time, Oakes Oval in Lismore, and the Topper Stadium, played host to two of the recent international matches featuring China and New Zealand. Both games enjoyed large crowds.

The further development of the Council of Associations is exciting news in itself and the guarantee of greater communication among the Associations and, in turn, with the Federation, is a certain winner.

All of the above is only an overview of the many great things that are happening in NNSW Soccer.

Towards the end of this year's AGM, there was a buzz of expectancy as the names of two men were to

be revealed for 'Life Membership'. These two gentlemen were Paul Trisley and Ken Kaiser.

As a little twist of irony, when the nominations were received, General Manager Garry Screen had both men

lar recipients for the 'Life Membership' of the Federation' Awards, which were presented by the President, Bill Walker.

The next selection of the AGM was to present the second annual 'Bill Turner Service To Soccer' Awards.

In 1996, two top officials — Brian Breckenridge, Tweed District Soccer Association, and Colin Foster, Weston Workers Bears Soccer Club, received this award. For 1997, Bill Bobbins, Raymond Terrace, and Alan Hampton, Grafton, were the worthy recipients.

A sprightly Mr Bill Turner was himself in attendance to make the presentations to the two gentlemen concerned.

In essence, what NNSW Soccer has achieved is well within the grasp of all associations Australia wide. Remember, they started with nothing too!



speaking for the other, neither of them knowing that he was also being nominated to receive it.

Paul Trisley's legal contributions and Ken Kaiser's leadership and coaching skills made them very popu-

AROUND THE CLUBS

Mawarra News

By Phil Murphy

SEVIN/HARLOCK: THE NEXT SAVAGE GARDEN?

A new song topped the charts at Brandon Park on Sunday night.

Popular group 'Alias', who have been performing on the Gold Coast for more than two years now, launched the song before Sunday night's match between Wolves and Adelaide City.

Players Sonny Sevin and Neil Harlock provided the words and 'Alias' performed the song as part of the pre-match entertainment.

Wolves captain Matt Horsley said the song was certain to be popular with supporters as it was a catchy tune and people would learn the words quickly.

"It will be used in all of our



Matt Horsley:
"It will be a popular song."

promotions along with our TV commercials," he said.

TAKEOVER COMPLETE

The Wolves consortium will officially takeover later next week.

All the legal papers have now been signed, sealed and delivered and a seven-man board will take control of the club's operations.

There are 18 consortium members who have contributed \$50,000 each with the prospect of two more coming in to inject a total of \$1 million into the club.



The consortium has received a lot of publicity in recent months and they are determined to develop Wolves into one of the biggest sporting clubs in Australia.

SUN TO SET ON SONNY?

Meanwhile in less happy news, Sonny Sevin wants to leave Wollongong City. He told ABSW he is frustrated because he can't get into the starting line-up.

He was unsettled earlier in the season but seemed content to stay at Brandon Park after claiming a regular place in the

side, however, he was injured against Gippsland and was out of action for three weeks.

Michael Reda and Anthony Surjan became the regular central midfield combination and Sevin has been unable to regain his spot in the team as a result.

He felt he should have played against Carlton at Optus Oval. "Alvin Ceccoli played in that game after he had been receiving treatment all week for a knee injury. Coach Nick Theodorakopoulos risked him and I had to go on in his place at half-time. I believe I should have started the game as I was fully fit. I don't think I have been getting a fair deal."

Sevin will come out of contract at the end of the season but he said he didn't want to spend the rest of this year on the bench. He would not reveal which club he wanted to move to.

Wolves Chairman Brian Hastings said he hadn't been informed by the club coach or general manager that Sevin wanted a transfer, but he did say that if a club came up with a good offer to buy him he could go.

ENGLISH KEEPER FOR WOLVES?

Wollongong are trialling an 18-year old goalkeeper from English First Division club Crewe Alexandra. He is Ben Burrows, who turned up for training last week.

Burrows, a free agent, said he has played in England in the Crewe youth team and reserves but felt there was no future for young players in England.

He said he thought the standard of the Ericsson Cup was good and he hoped to get a contract with Wolves. If this does happen then this will add pressure on existing keepers, Hughes and Brodbeck.

By Dwyght Tuffnell

WORDEN'S SHOESTRING SQUAD

Melbourne Knights coach Ken Worden will not be bringing in any new players for the rest of the season.

After a bid to entice former player Zeljko Adzic back to the club failed, Worden has decided to stick with what he has.

"As far as I am concerned, this is what we've got and we just have to get on with it."

Despite the Knights having one of the youngest squads in the country, they are still perched in a position that could see them make the finals once again, a fact not lost on their coach.

"We were a failure last year and we've lost three players since then and only brought in (Ivan) Jolic. I'm over the moon we're keeping it together."

"We've only spent \$4,000 this year on Jolic and look at what Perth Glory have spent and they're only a couple of points ahead of us."

"One or two other teams have bought out of sight and are also only one or two points in front of us."

Worden isn't thinking about the Finals, insisting that it is important to keep themselves in a position where, at the end of the season, may see them in the finals.

"With the team we have I think we're doing quite well, we're in there and if we stay focussed, we'll stay in there."

KRESIMIR ON ENFORCED BREAK

Carlton are likely to miss star midfielder Kresimir Marusic for the next couple of weeks.

Last season's 'Player of the Year' has struggled since the start of the campaign with a troublesome groin and has not looked the same player that he did for Sydney United.

Blues coach Eddie Krncevic was not going to take Marusic for the trip to Perth last weekend, and said that a couple of weeks rest was much needed.



Kresimir Marusic

Victorian Update

SHARKS DEVOUR MARKET

Port Melbourne Sharks have been the busiest team in the transfer market, recruiting seven new players for the coming season in the Victorian Premier.

The Sharks have lost John Dimitrelos and Nick Papadopoulos to Green Gully, but their new players should ensure at least a Finals berth.

New coach, former Heidelberg and Bulleen mentor Andy Bozidak, has returned to Bulleen to sign Pat Giaccherini, Bill Tsiakos and Tom Sonsini.

Peter Tsolakis has also signed, however he has already been injured and

ruled out for the season.

Former Melbourne Knights and Sunshine midfielder Arthur Tsirtsakis joins as does Paul Temos and Costas Kaimakamis.

Kaimakamis comes from First Division club Kingston City and has experience in the Greek First Division with Panserraikos.

An indication of the potential of the Sharks came last week when Port played a friendly against Ericsson Cup heavyweights Carlton. The Premier League side slayed them 4-0! The Blues of Carlton fielded an almost full strength side in the first half but it was still not enough.

Scorers for Port were Tsirtsakis (2), Alex Efsthathiou and Chris Palatsides. Well done boys and good luck for the new Premier League season.

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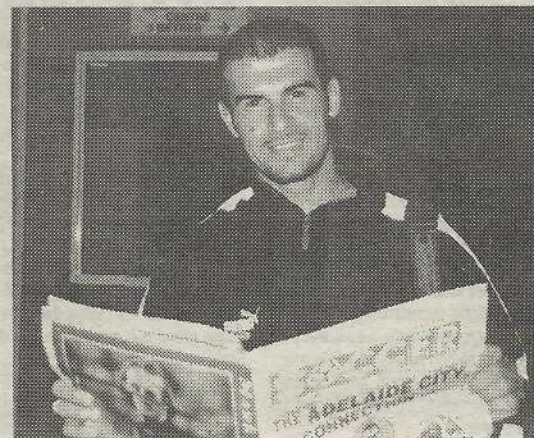
Inspirational leader.



Eddie Krncevic



Robbie Hooker



Abbas Saad

CONFUSED?

Dear Sir,
I do not know what to think about the latest rumour but I suspect, without proof, it is this: Mr Venables had an offer to coach the Nigerian soccer team, for very big money, in next year's World Cup Finals and/or the Australian soccer team for a mere \$400,000.

He may have favoured Nigeria if he had to make an instant decision.

He might have said to himself: "Don't say anything yet, do nothing, just wait and see," and the reason for this, in my heart of hearts, is why he didn't give the order to close down the game against Iran at the MCG, when we were 2-0 in front. After all, our only aim was to qualify for France.

We know now that he hasn't taken the Nigerian job and has made himself available again for the Socceroos and, silly as we are, accept him — the jolly joker — with open arms as our last and only saviour.

Mr Venables' first weakness is that if he had a plan, he didn't ask himself if it was logical or not.

The use of, against the Saudis, nearly the same defence as against Brazil, was not logical, just as it was not logical to start the game with Aloisi and Mori up front? It would surely have been better to start the game with Viduka and Kewell. He may have thought: "We will surely beat the Saudis," and so started with the wrong option.

His second weakness is that he appears to believe in his imagination and not reality. If you believe something hasn't happened, why then did we finish that match with

Viduka and Kewell?

What is so mystifying about the national coaching? Why does Mr Hill have a fixed idea that only overseas people can do the job?

What about the Australian born up-and-coming coaches: Krncevic, Mitchell, Theodorakopoulos, Farina, Kosmina, Marocchi, Culina etc?

When choosing a team, the onus is on the talented players, not on the experienced coach. After all, it is the young men who play the game, not the coach who is on the pitch.

Perhaps the way forward is younger coaches, new ideas promptness and enthusiasm while the older ones provide settled ways, slowness, silliness.

I do not know, but why are people so gutless, so afraid to choose a young national coach?

R Marton
St Marys, NSW

Editor's note:

If life were as simple as putting on the rose tinted glasses, wouldn't we all be doing so?

For the highest position in the sport, you must have an experienced person, regardless of where they come from as I'm sure that only the minority could do the job and I for one am not fit to second-guess any coach, international, NSL or State League for that matter.

To speak with hindsight is the gift of the masses, to speak in future tense is the gift of few. Nostrodamus was pretty good at it, Jules Verne was another but after that ...

Dear Sir,
One way or another, it was going to be a day to remember. Unfortunately, it wasn't the way we wanted to remember it on that fateful day on November 29 1997. One more goal and someone could have put their name up in lights and into the history books as the man who put Australia into the World Cup Finals for only the second time. He would have been a national hero.

But it wasn't to be. The crowd was awesome, the atmosphere electric, the behaviour was wonderful and everyone had a great time, under the circumstances, and proved a credit to our game.

Good luck to Iran. It has done wonders for their country and for that reason alone, I'm happy for them. It's great to see the world game bringing their country together. Now we have four more years to improve the NSL, out in

the infrastructure to handle the up and coming boom that will take place in our sport. We have four more years to prepare for the next World Cup so let's make the right decisions for the future of the game, not only do we want to qualify for the next World Cup, but we want to go all the way. If we're going to be in it, we might as well win it!

We should prepare our team, not only for qualifying, but to win the competition. Let's get serious about it. Remember the pain for it will inspire us on to greater heights.

If only we could have scored that third goal. As we say in the west: 'It would have been glorious' but now we must prepare our Olyroo side as that is Australia's next challenge. It will lead us into the next World Cup, 2002.

Go Socceroos.

P Botari
Balcatta, WA

Letters to the Editor

Have your say on any soccer issue in the world. Preference will be given to short letters. Include daytime phone



Short letters of about 400 words will be given preference in this column.

The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper

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number for verification.

POOR CROWDS

Dear Sir,

With the poor crowds at Ericsson Cup games this season, it's obvious the league is suffering from the exodus of quality players. Although the figures indicate the crowds are the same as last season, Perth's phenomenal figures embarrass the rest of the league, particularly the established clubs. The current format is simply not working. Soccer Australia need to revamp the league for next season.

It must be lengthened, which would convince more players to stay within these shores. SA could either increase the number of clubs to 16, making a 30 round season, or decrease the number to 10 (regionally based), for a 36 round season if they play each other home and away twice. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

As far as expansion of the league is concerned, this would be coming at a time when this country is already suffering from a shortage of players, resulting in an apparently lower standard of play, but would give all the current clubs time to improve themselves without the threat of expulsion. Conversely, a radical reduction of clubs would surely result in a higher standard of play, but their is the disadvantage of causing much pain and controversy in soccer circles by axing five or six clubs.

The media would probably have a greater interest in a reduced 'Super League' type competition, so commercial TV coverage would be more easily achieved. Whatever course of action is chosen, I just hope that we have a stable league in the long term, because good football teams are not created overnight.

Many ABSW readers have sent letters saying the new non-ethnic clubs, such as Carlton, are doing better than ethnic ones. Sure, Carlton's crowds (5,000+ average), have not set the world on fire but you have to admit they are doing well in their first year. I'm sure Sydney clubs like Sydney United and other such as Gippsland Falcons would love to have crowds that size, however, Carlton are setting a new pace in terms of corporate sponsorship, with companies like Parmalat, Nike and Coca Cola behind them. How many other clubs have that sort of backing? None!

There is no doubt that Soccer Australia's

attempts to broaden the appeal of the Ericsson Cup have alienated some of the traditional supporters, and I don't think that these clubs can be turned into mainstream clubs overnight, probably never for some clubs, although South Melbourne seem to be doing reasonably well. There is also no doubt that more mainstream clubs need to be brought into Melbourne, and particularly Sydney. I honestly hope Northern Spirit increase the stakes next season, like Carlton and Perth.

The huge exposure for the Socceroos has proven a few people wrong, including myself in previous letters to ABSW, that soccer would never receive any significant media exposure. What it proves is that local clubs can also receive positive attention if they give Australians a real product (eg: Perth Glory).

With the amount of well financed consortiums begging SA to enter the league, it seem some of the existing, under achieving clubs' days could well be numbered, particularly in Sydney. I know that sounds harsh, but unfortunately, tough decisions must be made. I'm just glad I don't have to make them.

Despite some of this season's disturbing signs, there can be no argument that the league will be stepping towards full-time professionalism next season. Carlton are already there, most of the Perth players are professional and, apparently, Northern Spirit plan to have a fully professional squad. If Rene Rivkin's takeover bid for Sydney Olympic is successful, then \$2 million per year would be handy, as well as Wollongong's privatisation.

Additionally, we should stick with regional clubs like Canberra because only two years ago Wollongong were at the bottom of the table and look where they are now!

G Owen,
Geelong, Vic

Editor's note:

Super League didn't work for the other football code, why would it for ours? Clubs playing each other four times a season only exacerbates a sad situation, take the Scottish Premier League for example. Only two or three clubs have a chance of the title and snare the Lions' share of the attendances. Still, plenty there in your missive for our readers to ponder. Good one.

SUPERB ARTICLE

Dear Sir

The excellent article by Stuart Jones, titled, "Is David Over The Hill" highlighted a few issues that needed airing. Not the least of which is the National League.

While media coverage has quite rightly been concentrated on the exploits of the Socceroos over the past couple of months, it must surely be about time that Soccer Australia switched its focus to actively promoting the national domestic competition.

Regrettably, many believe that this current season has displayed the poorest standard on record, and I certainly am not going to argue with anyone on that score.

While a full house at the MCG, and games against Brazil DO raise the profile with the average Aussie punter, they don't come around that often, unlike the Ericsson Cup which grinds on week in and week out.

Improve the standard at the bread and butter level, market the league properly and the benefits will eventually flow on to international level.

But, important as it is from a marketing viewpoint that the Socceroo continue to do well, don't forget that more people attend club games than attend Socceroo fixtures throughout the year.

Ignore them, and they will eventually desert the game.

Name And Address Supplied

Now you can also send your letters to ABSW's email address at:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au
We encourage you to use this service.

You What!?!?

Dear Sir,

What rock did Stuart Jones crawl out from under?

His personal account of David Hill is way off the mark and way out of line for responsible journalism. He has raised a number of incorrect and inconsistent comments and only adds to the problem of our football code being united. He is just adding fuel to the minds of those irrational and secular bodies who only want football to exist for 'their' people and minority community.

In the second paragraph, Mr Jones is into David Hill about what he has said, putting people offside etc. If he is referring to Mr Hill's comments re Iran, then Mr Jones should listen to what was said: "A logistical nightmare to bring all the Socceroos to Iran from various countries."

You try and organise air flights for 20 odd people in six days to a country that is not frequently visited. Also, every traveller is warned not to drink the local water in countries they visit, and beware of the locally cooked food. Every country! Why should Iran be different?

As for practice matches, do those who criticise Hill for not organising more games realise that games against other countries are booked years ahead and that most countries were also involved in World Cup qualifiers and did not have the freedom to play us.

Mr Jones comments about Hill's attendances at NSL games is a joke. I've seen David Hill, and spoke to him, at no less than three Wollongong matches in 1997, one with Terry Venables and George Negus. Here he is, at 'little' Wollongong, so I'm sure he will spend more time at the bigger clubs. How many games have you been to Stuart?

Radio coverage of games is not the sole responsibility of Soccer Australia. Sure, SA can push, approach or whatever, to have radio coverage but the ultimate decision is with the radio station. The same goes for commercial TV coverage, but we all know what they like to report on and it isn't our football.

What relevance has question No.2, re Mark Viduka, No.4 re Graham Arnold and No.5 re the Soccer media have?

Mr Jones talks about David Hill's one-man battle against all the negative forces embedded in Australian soccer. You, Mr Jones, are one of those forces, if your article is anything to go by, although you say you are a supporter of the game who wants nothing more than to see the best for it. By bagging the best thing that has happened to our game since 1974, and then saying you want the best for our sport, get behind it and push it forward, not down! You have space in the paper so why not use it to the game's advantage and best interests.

How can David Hill be an 'indictment on the game in Australia'? Look at the crowd figures for the last two and a half seasons since Hill became chairman. Increases of 24% and 25% on previous season's figures. This year they have not been quite so spectacular but consider that both Adelaide clubs have not had their regular stadium available for nearly half the campaign and Adelaide City still have four games in hand to play. I think the figures will be above last season's.

Hill gave Perth Glory a chance and look at the results. They have set the benchmark and it is up to other clubs to follow or they will fold. Simple!

There has also been an increase in positive coverage of our game on commercial TV and radio, so tell me Mr Jones, why is David Hill the target of your poison pen? It certainly cannot be professional.

And while I'm at it, South Melbourne president George Vasilopoulos complains that reforms by Soccer Australia 'have achieved little but to alienate many of the games traditional followers'. So what? If these reforms have increased crowd figures and commercial coverage, then it is a step in the right direction instead of the game floundering in its own vicious circle of ethnic support and bitter fighting.

A broader range of the community has become involved in our game through club sponsors and game support on match day.

So I say, three cheers for Perth Glory and what they have achieved so far, and three louder cheers for David Hill and what he has achieved. Let the game roll on and grow.

David Hunt,
Gerrington, NSW

Editor's note:

Firstly, at the last count, Mr Jones had attended 21 matches in the first 14 rounds of NSL competition. Mr Jones has a perfect right to say what he feels, just as you have and as long as it is constructive, no-one should become upset. Sadly, this has not always been the case. I support what David Hill has attempted and achieved but even I wonder what is going to happen next. Perth are held aloft as the shining jewel in an ever glistening crown but Nick Tana has stated that SA are not keeping pace with them in generating a more fruitful league of higher standards, marketing and professionalism (Perth Glory will spend \$750,000 alone this year on marketing and advertising). In brief: Should not SA have asked for the Oceania World Cup matches to be moved nearer to the Asian qualifying matches? Should they not have strongly protested the fact that six days isn't enough preparation time for a national team at such an advanced stage of qualification? Should not SA be promoting the sport more? Should not the clubs be doing the same if it comes to that? Nevertheless I feel you raise some very interesting points.

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Rising Stars

National Youth League Rd 15

By Roy Hay

SOUTHERN DIVISION

League leader Melbourne Knights confirmed its top spot with a three-one away win over Gippsland Falcons.

The Latrobe Valley boys played for almost an hour with ten men after Lumanovski was sent-off.

Adrian Savage put the Falcons ahead in 50 minutes, but Damon Collina equalised nine minutes later. Two late goals by John Kalabric secured the win for the Knights.

Meanwhile Carlton had a four-one away win over Altona Magic at Paisley Park on Saturday. Jovanco Novacevski opened for Carlton in 27 minutes and Steve Markovski replied for the Magic seven minutes after that. Branko Bacak was next to score, putting the Blues in front in 56 and Daniel Allsopp banged in two quick goals in 68 and 72 minutes as Carlton established its supremacy on the day.

Across town and South Melbourne and the Victorian Institute of Sport drew one-all at Bob Jane Stadium. Pat Arcuri scored for the VIS after 20 minutes and the VIS might well have capitalised on the lead but when it failed to do so, Souths came back and Louie Rozanitis was credited with the equalising goal, though there was a ruck of bodies around the ball as it went into the net.

Bulleen played Bentleigh Greens on Monday night and the match between Altona Magic and South Melbourne Rockets, which was abandoned, will be played on Wednesday night.

NORTHERN DIVISION

UTS Olympic Colts surprised QAS with a three-two win at home on Saturday. The Queenslanders took the lead through Jade North and dominated the rest of the first half without adding to that goal. Ali Jomaa equalised for the Colts just before the break then scored again in the second half, only for Alan Cameron to equalise.

The Colts kept plugging away and deserved the winning goal late in the game, thus completing Jomaa's hat-trick.

Marconi Fairfield had a hard fought two-on win over UTS Olympic at Marconi Stadium in the Sydney derby. Nick Carle gave Olympic its goal after nineteen minutes and Olympic was still ahead till late in the first half when Devrim Huseyin equalised in 42 minutes.

Chad Gibson scored the winner in the 54th minute for the Stallions.

NSW Institute of Sport went down heavily at home to Sydney United Colts by five goals to one. Nonos Bobo opened for the Colts in 36 minutes and Jason Kencevski added a second in 43. Steven Dimovski's penalty made it three-nil for the Colts but Simon Catanzaro pulled a goal back in 68. Two late goals by Bobo (again) and Michael Clare saw the Colts home.

The AIS scraped home for a one-nil win away to Wollongong City thanks to a single strike by Chris Tancevski.

Sydney United overwhelmed the ACT Academy by seven goals to nil. It was four-nil at the break and Nick Bosevski completed a hat-trick, while Daniel Kukucka scored twice. The other goals were singles from Azur Mujanovic and Joel Griffiths.

SOUTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

Gippsland Falcons	1	Melbourne Knights	3
Savage		Kalabric 2, Collina	
Altona Magic	1	Carlton	4
Markovski		Allsopp 2, Bacak, Novacevski	
South Melbourne	1	VIS	1
Rozani		Arcuri	

Heidelberg United, Albury Wodonga had byes.

NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

Marconi Fairfield	2	UTS Olympic	1
Huseyin, Gibson		Carle	
NSWIS	1	Sydney United Colts	5
Catanzaro		Bobo 2, Kencevski, Dimovski, Clare	
UTS Olympic Colts	3	QAS	2
Jomaa 3		North, Cameron	
Sydney United	7	ACTAS	0
Bosevski 3, Kukucka 2, Mujanovic, Griffiths			
Wollongong City	0	AIS	1
		Tancevski	

Newcastle Breakers and Marconi Fairfield Colts had byes.

SOUTHERN DIVISION TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mel Knights	13	11	0	2	49	14	33
Carlton	11	10	0	1	25	5	30
Gippsland	12	8	2	2	23	11	26
VIS	12	6	3	3	30	15	21
Bulleen Inter	10	4	1	5	13	17	13
Bent Greens	11	4	1	6	11	19	13
Heidelberg Utd	11	4	1	6	12	24	13
South Melbourne	11	2	3	6	21	19	9
Albury Wodonga	11	3	0	8	14	18	9
Altona Magic	10	1	2	7	12	30	5
Sth Mel Rockets	10	1	1	8	9	47	4

NORTHERN DIVISION TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	13	10	2	1	58	10	32
UTS Olympic	13	7	3	3	36	21	24
QAS	13	6	4	3	32	17	22
W'gong City	13	6	3	4	28	22	21
Marconi	13	6	2	5	22	25	20
Marconi Colts	12	5	2	5	18	26	17
ACTAS	13	4	4	5	16	37	16
Sydney Utd	12	3	6	3	30	25	15
Newcastle	12	4	3	5	24	27	15
Syd Utd Colts	12	3	1	8	13	33	10
UTS Oly Colts	13	3	1	9	18	44	10
NSWIS	13	2	3	8	17	25	9

Leading Scorers Southern Division

Zoran Petrevski	VIS	12
Adis Kablar	Melb Knights	9
Jovanco Novacevski	Carlton	8
John Kalabric	Melb Knights	8
Festim Zekiri	Melb Knights	7

Northern Division

*Mile Sterjovski	AIS	22
Mark Hagger	Mar Fairfield Colts	13
Marc Bresciano	AIS	9
Tony Krslovic	Syd Utd Colts	8
*Mile Sterjovski has now signed for Sydney Utd		

Round 16 Fixtures Southern Division

Friday, January 16

Bentleigh Greens v Heidelberg United (6.30pm, Kingston Heath)

Sunday, January 18

South Melbourne Rockets v Altona Magic (5pm, Bob Jane Stadium)

Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne (3.30pm, Knights Stadium)

Albury Wodonga v Bullen Inter (6pm, Diamond Park)

Carlton, VIS, Gippsland Falcons all have byes.

Northern Division

Friday, January 16

Newcastle Breakers v NSWIS (5.15pm, Topper Stadium)

Saturday, January 17

QAS v Wollongong City (4.30 pm, Suncorp Stadium)

ACTAS v Marconi Fairfield (3.30 pm, Seiffert Oval)

Sunday, January 18

UTS Olympic Colts v Sydney United Colts (4pm, Belmore Sports Ground)

Marconi Fairfield Colts v Sydney United (5pm, Marconi Stadium)

UTS Olympic, AIS have byes.





ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports



SAAD'S CLASS SHINES THROUGH

SYDNEY UNITED.....4 CANBERRA COSMOS.....1

By John Economos

Sydney United cemented their lead with a 4-1 win over gallant visiting Canberra Cosmos last Sunday night at Parramatta Stadium.

However the final scoreline proved a little flattering as three of United's goals came from penalties.

Also Canberra went a man down seconds before half-time as referee Con Diomis dismissed left back Dale Wingell for fouling striker Abbas Saad, for a second bookable offence.

The vastly improved and confident team from the national capital had United under enormous pressure in the first 25 minutes.

Only some poor finishing and a couple of excellent blocks pulled off by United's towering keeper Zelko Kalac prevented Canberra from steaming into a possible lead by half-time.

Recently returned from Malaysia (Negri in fact), striker Tristram Morgan burst clear into United's box as early as the 11th minute but Kalac made a fabulous point blank save.

The 13th minute also proved luckless for the Cosmos as left midfielder Lindsay Wilson went wide, with only Kalac to beat, after Morgan had put him into the clear.

Canberra were on fire but couldn't burn their opponent. However United in the 22nd

minute were awarded a penalty for a foul by Wingell on United's uncanny striker Abbas Saad.

Young Puma skipper Paul Bilokapic gratefully slammed his left-footed shot into the net for a 1-0 lead.

Saad doubled the scoreline three minutes into injury time of the first session with a fabulous piece of play. Gaining possession, Saad dribbled his way into the box, then along the byline on the left of the target. With the Canberra defence expecting a Saad cut-back, he suddenly spun round to hit a snap shot between the first post and Giannasca (with the ball clipping Wilson on the way through).

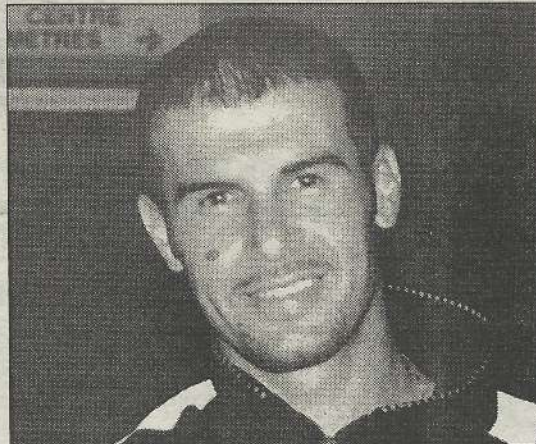
Five minutes into the second half the intelligent Jason

Culina trebled United's scoreline by driving a Saad pass, from an angle, deep into the target from the edge of the box.

Finally Canberra stung back in the 78th minute with a fine strike from Olympic squad marksman Peter Buljan (his fifth goal in three games).

The final nail in Canberra's coffin came well into stoppage time as Bilokapic hit an inswinging corner that sailed straight into the net despite a slight touch from Giannasca's desperate glove.

A very disappointed Canberra coach Branko Culina stated after the match: "We missed far too many chances early and we got penalised for it. Then there was the sending off (Wingell) that killed us.



Abbas Saad: Superb run and shot for United second goal awarded as a Wilson own goal.

Overall though I was pleased with my guys' effort especially in the first half hour. Meanwhile United's David Mitchell reflected thoughtfully: "I was happy even though we had a shaky start as they played long balls to get behind us. Kalac had a couple of saves to make, then we kicked

on. I think, however, that some of my players felt sorry for Branko (Culina their former coach) and eased off a bit."

Abbas (Saad) was all class again and surely must be again knocking on the door for international recall.

UNITED: Kalac, Barrett, Kupresak, Vrkic, Bennett (Jerman 71) Phillips (Burns 46), Bilokapic, Saad, Hooker J.Culina, Sterjovski.

COSMOS: Giannasca, Wingell, Roberts, Hunter, Popovich, Ravanello, Kelly, Moric, Wilson (Musitano 62), Buljan, Morgan (Prenzowski 46).

SCORERS

United: Bilokapic 22,90, Saad 45, J. Culina 53

Canberra: Buljan 78

CROWD: 3,878.

POY

3 Saad (SU)
2 J.Culina(SU)
1 Bilokapic (SU)

WOLVES GO MARCHING ON

WOLLONGONG 2 ADELAIDE CITY 1

By Phil Murphy

Wollongong Wolves Fijian international Esala Masi took advantage of a rare slip from Adelaide City captain Alex Tobin to give his team a 2-1 win over the Zebras at Brandon Park on Sunday night.

The game was poised at 1-1 after 34 minutes when Tobin, under no pressure, slipped just outside his penalty area and Masi swooped to beat goalkeeper Jason Petkovic with a low drive.

It was a tragic incident for Tobin but Wollongong deserved to win a game that provided plenty of excitement for the crowd of 7,604.

They dominated the game for long periods and only Petkovic saved his team from a heavier defeat.

He made two fine saves to deny Masi his hat-trick and pushed a great drive from Alvin Ceccoli over his crossbar for a corner.

Petkovic also prevented Scott Chipperfield improving his goal tally.



Wollongong marked Adelaide's leading scorer, Damian Mori, tightly but Mori had a great chance 15 minutes from the end.

He eluded two defenders only to have goalkeeper Adam Brodbeck come off his line to make a good save.

Brad Hassell then ghosted

in behind the home team's defence to hammer a shot onto the left post and it flew across the face of the goal.

After a very bright start, the Wolves went ahead in the 18th minute after good work from David Huxley and Tony Perinich.

This left Alvin Ceccoli clear on the right and his cross was put away by Masi. Five minutes later it was 1-1.

Referee Eugene Brazzale awarded the visitors a penalty after Jason Connolly fouled John Gibson just inside the box.

Tobin made no mistake with his spot kick. Adelaide coach John Nyskohous said after the game he was making no excuses.

"We played Newcastle in midweek but that didn't affect us," the coach said.

"We had enough of the ball

but just didn't defend as well as we should have away from home.

"Alex Tobin's mistake was just part of football."

Wolves boss Nick Theodorakopoulos said his team played very well tactically.

"We should have scored three or four more goals," he said.

"I am very pleased with that performance.

"We are playing great stuff at home and must now start getting points from away games."

The crowd was the Wolves biggest of the season and has taken their average up over the 5,000 mark.

A win in Brisbane on Saturday night will attract an even bigger crowd to Brandon Park for the game against Melbourne Knights.



Jason Petkovic: Strong between the sticks.

WOLLONGONG: Brodbeck, Ceccoli, Stanton, Connolly, Horsley (Spencer 80), Surjan, Reda (Sevin 31), Chipperfield, Perinich, Huxley, Masi.

ADELAIDE CITY: Petkovic, Amor, Ivanovic, Tobin, Costanzo, Mori, Hassell (Yates 80), Menillo (Sabljak 45), Gibson, Trajanovski (Brooks 60), Thomas.

CROWD: 7,604

SCORERS:

Wollongong: Masi 18 and 34.
Adelaide City: Tobin 23p

POY

3 Masi (WC)
2 Petkovic (AC)
1 Surjan (WC)

SOUTH TOO HOT FOR QUEENSLANDERS

SOUTH MELBOURNE.....5 BRISBANE STRIKERS.....1

By Dwyght Tuffnell

According to Brisbane Strikers' coach Frank Farina his side must win nine out of the eleven remaining games to have a shot at making the top six.

This view came after last season's champions' heaviest defeat of the season at the hands of South Melbourne in front of almost 8,000 at Lakeside on Sunday.

"We're still a mathematical chance, but 27 out of a possible 33 points is a big ask," said Farina.

He conceded that the first

ten minutes swung the game, with South taking a two goal lead.

The first came after just 32 seconds in a move that tore the Strikers defence apart.



Goran Lozanovski beat both Glen Gwynne and Mark Battistin on the right hand side

before picking out Michael Curcija with a inch perfect cross.

It was probably easier for Curcija to score than miss but his header crashed against the post and hit Bill Damianos before trickling over line.

Lozanovski continued to give Brisbane a torrid time and set up the second goal in the tenth minute with a little help from Kasey Wehrman, whose misdirected pass found Lozanovski — instead of a team mate — and he was made to pay as Lozanovski crossed for John Anastasiadis who had time to control, shoot and score.

Anastasiadis saw no further action, however, succumbing to a groin strain and was replaced by Vaughan Coveny after just 17 minutes.

A third South goal in the 23rd minute ended the game as a contest.

Substitute Coveny cut the ball back for Fausto De Amicis whose square pass was missed by Curcija but not by Paul Trimboli.

Brisbane though, to their credit, came back into the game and grabbed a goal soon after.

All-time leading NSL scorer, Rod Brown, received a through ball from Nick

Meredith and had time and space to pick his spot.

Damianos then livened up what was turning out to be a dull second half with a superb strike in the 71st minute.

He collected the ball from David Clarkson in midfield and, seeing that Bolton was just off his line, lobbed the Strikers' keeper.

Five minutes later Coveny completed the scoring to ironical cheers from the crowd (who had seen him play a couple of wayward passes).

He was too quick for Chris Zoricich and his shot was too good for Bolton.

"Vaughan's one of those players who gets in good scoring positions but is sometimes let down by his finishing but he scored a good goal today and worked hard for the team," said South supreme Ange Postecoglou.

He expected a hard game against the Strikers and didn't think for a moment that it would be as easy as it turned out.

"They're a team that's lacking confidence and us scoring after 30 seconds was probably the last thing they needed."

"You can't give a team like South Melbourne a three goal start, especially when they're playing well and sitting second in the league," visiting coach Farina reflected later.

"The game for us was lost in the first ten minutes, we weren't picking up at the back.

"Today was a clear indication of a team that's playing with confidence and a team playing without confidence," ended Farina. The question now is: Can the Strikers regain their confidence?

SOUTH: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Clarkson (Panopoulos 72), Trimboli (Catalano 81), Curcija, Damianos, Lozanovski, Baser, Anastasiadis (Coveny 17), Liparoti. STRIKERS: Bolton, Gwynne, Zoricich, Meredith, Farina, S.Cranney (Blackford 66), Brown, Wehrman, Battistin (Bell 27), Hews, Packer (Knipe 72).

SCORERS

South: Damianos 1,71, Anastasiadis 10, Trimboli 23, Coveny 76

Strikers: Brown 26

CROWD: 7,827

POY

3 Damianos (SM)
2 Liparoti (SM)
1 Lozanovski (SM)



Results Round Fifteen

Marconi	1	Sydney Olympic	1	South Melbourne	5	Brisbane Strikers	1
Gippsland Falcons	1	Melbourne Knights	2	Wollongong City	2	Adelaide City	1
Perth Glory	0	Carlton	0	Sydney Utd	4	Canberra Cosmos	1
Adelaide Sharks	3	Newcastle Breakers	1				

Round Sixteen Fixtures

Odds courtesy of SportOdds

2.75	Adelaide Sharks	3.25	Adelaide City	2.25
2.25	Newcastle Breakers	3.25	Gippsland Falcons	2.75
2.55	Brisbane	3.25	Wollongong	2.45
2.50	Canberra	3.25	Marconi	2.50
3.00	Melbourne Knights	3.25	South Melbourne	2.00
1.60	Adelaide City	3.50	Perth Glory	3.50
2.00	Sydney Utd	3.25	Carlton	3.00
2.30	Sydney Olympic	3.25	Adelaide Sharks	2.70

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Round 16 Preview

By Stuart Jones

Newcastle Breakers v Gippsland Falcons

Last time they played at home Newcastle came away with a draw in a match they could have won. Last season this clash ended 2-2 as well. Plus, earlier this year in Victoria, the result was 1-1.

Prediction: Newcastle

SYDNEY



Sydney United v Carlton

United take on Carlton in their third home game on the trot. In Round two the Blues drew 1-1 at home. This clash should be an outstanding match between two of the league's big clubs.

Prediction: Draw

Brisbane Strikers v Wollongong City

Brisbane will look to re-establish a winning run at home against the Wolves. The Strikers won 2-1 at home last season, and also by a single goal at WIN Stadium earlier this term and if Wolves are



going to be part of the finals, they need to win on the road ... again.

Prediction: Wollongong

Canberra Cosmos v Marconi Fairfield

There can be no dispute that the last time they played at home Canberra would have scared a few teams yet to visit them. Add to this Marconi's woeful away form and this could be very tight. Marconi defeated the Cosmos 2-0 earlier this year, and last season won 3-2 at Bruce Stadium.

Prediction: Draw



Adelaide City v Perth Glory

Last season Perth managed a 1-1 draw from this game while earlier this year Glory were thrashed 1-4 at home in City's first game of the campaign. Perth got a point from their last away game and will hope for even more in this top fixture.

Prediction: Adelaide City

Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne

The Knights won this match last year 1-0 and it will be another tough road trip for

South Melbourne. The game played in Round Two saw a 2-2 draw (one of many for South), and this could be a quality game at Knights Stadium.

Prediction: Knights

UTS Olympic v Adelaide Sharks

Olympic lost the corresponding fixture 1-4 last season. Earlier this year they again lost, this time 3-1, at Thebarton Oval. Both are just out of the top six and a loss for either would make things very difficult for the remainder of the season.

Prediction: Sharks



1998 WORLD CUP

Brazil	4.00
France	7.00
England	8.00
Germany	8.00
Holland	9.00
Italy	9.00
Argentina	13.00
Spain	16.00
Yugoslavia	23.00
Croatia	26.00
Nigeria	29.00
Romania	29.00
Denmark	34.00
Colombia	41.00
Norway	41.00
Bulgaria	51.00
Paraguay	51.00
Belgium	61.00
Austria	91.00
Cameroon	101.00
Chile	126.00
Mexico	126.00
Scotland	141.00
Morocco	151.00
Sth Africa	201.00
Sth Korea	201.00
USA	201.00
Jamaica	251.00
Saudi Arabia	251.00
Japan	401.00
Tunisia	401.00
Iran	501.00

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ERICSSON CUP LEADING SCORERS

13 Pablo Cardozo	Adelaide Sharks
11 Damian Mori	Adelaide City
10 Scott Chipperfield	Wollongong
8 Abbas Saad	Sydney United
7 Peter Buljan	Canberra Cosmos
7 Tom Pondeljak	Melbourne Knights
7 Norman Tome	UTS Olympic
6 Brad Maloney	Marconi
6 Clayton Zane	Newcastle Breakers
6 John Anastasiadis	South Melbourne
6 Paul Trimboli	South Melbourne
6 Anthony Surjan	Wollongong City

ERICSSON CUP TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney Utd	15	9	5	1	25	11	32
Sth Melbourne	15	8	5	2	37	22	29
Adelaide City	13	8	0	5	26	14	24
Carlton	15	6	6	3	18	14	24
Wollongong	14	7	1	6	31	15	22
Melb Knights	14	6	4	4	20	16	22
Perth Glory	15	6	4	5	19	21	22
Adelaide Sharks	14	6	2	6	22	22	20
Marconi Fairfield	15	5	4	6	15	21	19
UTS Olympic	15	5	3	7	16	27	18
Gippsland	15	4	5	6	10	17	17
Brisbane Strikers	15	4	0	11	11	22	12
Canberra	15	2	6	7	19	32	12
Newcastle	15	1	5	9	15	30	8



ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports



CARDOZO DOES IT AGAIN

ADELAIDE SHARKS 3 NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1

By Val Migliaccio

The A-League's leading goalscorer Pablo Cardozo, now with 13 goals, was the hero for the Sharks after he scored the winning second goal in stoppage time to seal the three points for the Sharks after a tough 3-1 win over the Newcastle Breakers.

Cardozo must surely be knocking on the Socceroo selection door.

His second goal came in the seventh minute of stoppage time and it was a classic goal which will be among the best goals of 1998. In one movement he made space for himself 20 metres away from goal and fired a rising drive into the top right hand corner

of the net.

Ten minutes of stoppage time was added by referee Wayne Dade after goalkeeper Frank Mikuletic came off injured. Defender Paul Pezos took over in goal with the Sharks down to ten men after coach Adrian Santrac had used all three available substitutes.

The Breakers had the first half chance of the match in the sixth minute but sweeper Robbie Ironside could not connect on the edge of the six yard box from a corner.

The match then turned into the battle of the midfield with the Breakers content to hold possession waiting to release striker Clayton Zane (who had a significant impact in the first half).

Sharks striker Jose Iriarte left the field in the 23rd

minute injured, replaced by Jim Tsekinis who instantly added bite to the Sharks' attacking moves. Cardozo was shifted forward to partner Nathan Day in attack with Tsekinis playing just behind.

Cardozo set the pace of the match in the 38th minute when his curling free kick from 25 metres cannoned off the inside of the post and out of danger for the Breakers.

The Breakers opened the scoring in the second minute of the second half with a great passage of play. From a Liam Baker goal kick, the ball was flicked on by Zane to Matthew Lowe who made a great run from the half way line before carefully chipping the advancing Sharks keeper Frank Mikuletic.

The Sharks looked

dangerous in set pieces and Nathan Day had a header cleared off the line from a corner kick in the 52nd minute.

The equaliser for the Sharks arrived in the 61st minute after some good lead up work by Tsekinis who released the overlapping Alex Castro on the right. Castro's pinpoint cross eliminated three Breakers defenders and Cardozo's powerful header gave Baker no chance.

The match came to life seven minutes into stoppage time when Cardozo scored the Sharks' second goal.

Three minutes later substitute Corey Artone wrapped up the three points for the Sharks after he combined with Tsekinis and



Clayton Zane: Best of the Breakers.

from 20 metres he placed the ball beautifully past Baker with his left foot. The Sharks finished 3-1 victors.

SHARKS: Mikuletic (off 80), Castro, Kokkinopitis, Day, Iriarte (Tsekinis 23), Cardozo, Perin (Borghetto 55), Cutillo, Oliveira (Artone 60), Misailidis.

BREAKERS: Baker, Austin, Pryce, McManus, Ironside, Ritchie, Wilson, Zane (McGuire 90), Bennett, Edwards (Sprod 47), Lowe.

SCORERS
Sharks: Cardozo 61, 87, Artone 90
Breakers: Lowe 47

CROWD: 2410

POY
3 Cardozo (AS)
2 Zane (NB)
1 Tsekinis (AS)

ANASTASIADIS DENIES GLORY

PERTH GLORY 0 CARLTON 0

By Richard Kreider

Dean Anastasiadis is perhaps not the easiest of names to remember, but a breathtaking display of goalkeeping that denied the Glory its first victory in five outings will linger in many a Glory supporter's mind.

In contrast, his opposite number Anthony Franken, had very little to do on this, his 33rd birthday.

The 0-0 result at Perth Oval last Sunday retained fourth place for the Blues on the Ericsson Cup standings, but it saw the Glory slide out of the top six into seventh position.

"I felt we should have got six points with the way we played," said Glory captain Gareth Naven (who was inspirational throughout the match).

"The boys put in a ninety-minute effort which was very pleasing," said Glory coach Gary Marocchi. "Whilst I am disappointed about not collecting the three points, I have to give Carlton credit for defending well and their goalkeeper was excellent in the set pieces."

Glory's first real strike came from Samson Siasia in the eighth minute when he struck the ball sweetly from

20 metres, but Anastasiadis denied the Nigerian international a goal by palming the ball smartly around his right-hand upright.

It was a frustrating afternoon for Perth striker Bobby Despotovski who was presented with a number of chances on goal, especially in the second-half, but his finishing was either too close to Anastasiadis or centimetres past the wrong side of the woodwork.

Even Glory's Man of the Match sweeper Vinko Buljubasic tried his luck on goal in the 81st minute with a rising 20 metre strike but the

Blues goalie was once again equal to it. David Cervinski was likewise a fine performer for the Blues, with his marking of Samson Siasia.

New signing Troy Halpin turned in a satisfactory first-up performance in midfield, and Gavin Wilkinson and Danny Hay both celebrated their call-up to the New Zealand side with solid displays in the Glory backline.

Wilkinson was given the daunting duty of keeping Carlton's lethal weapon John Markovski quiet, which he did superbly, excluding a 61st minute header which crashed into the cross-bar.



Bobby Despotovski: Fine performer for Glory

Socceroo Ernie Tapai was once again noticeable by his absence because of a thigh injury that seems to be taking forever to heal.

"Ernie has been a big signing for us, but he has only played eight games out of the fifteen which is a bit

disconcerting," said Marocchi.

"I hope he is able to travel to Adelaide City next week, but we can't afford to risk it if it is still not right."

In the end though it was Carlton's keeper that was the key to this draw.

well after their Canberra (8-1 loss) affair.

"Mario (Ansaldi) can play that role ('screener') but obviously he is still not fit after having not played regularly for almost a year. It was hard not winning but it all depends on really on how much we really wanted to win."

Meanwhile a somewhat relieved Sydney Olympic

coach, Geoff Harcombe, reflected "I'm certainly happy with a point but especially after we lost Jean-Paul we had to knuckle down and show some real character in the last twenty minutes.

We are trying a different strike combination nearly every week since we lost Derek Poimer. We defended well and overall I must say I was satisfied."

PERTH GLORY: Franken, Wilkinson, Buljubasic, Naven, Miller, Despotovski, Siasia, Halpin (Garcia 60), Hay, Carbone, Halpin.

CARLTON SC: Anastasiadis, Trajkovski, Douglas (Della Rocca 65), Vargas (Stergiopoulos 54), Lapsansky, Vlahos, Colosimo (Josefovski 71), Grella, Markovski, Cervinski, Atkinson.

CROWD: 14,687

POY
3 Buljubasic (PG)
2 Anastasiadis (C)
1 Wilinon (PG)

CATLIN'S HEROIC RETURN

MARCONI 1 SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic's giant goalkeeper Bobby Catlin greatly inspired his team by holding Marconi to a 1-1 draw last Saturday night at the Marconi Stadium.

This was a respectable result after Olympic's 8-1 demolition by Canberra Cosmos just five days earlier.

As well as having to rely on the heroics of Catlin between the posts, Olympic were severely handicapped when they had to battle the last twenty minutes a man down after central marker Jean-Paul de Marigny was marched from the field after fouling Mendez (his second yellow).

Olympic drew first blood in

the 21st minute when lanky midfielder Ante Juric stole possession from Marconi's Dominic Longo and dribbled into the box to side foot his first goal of the season.

But six minutes earlier Marconi should have opened the 'innings' when gangling striker Francis Awaritefe stabbed from close range over the horizontal.

And Olympic had another narrow escape when a Brad Maloney cross saw wingback Luke Casserly head just wide of the left post.

Ten minutes after Olympic's goal Marconi's Brad Maloney 'balanced the books' hitting a twelve metre first time drive following a magnificent flat cross blasted in from the right by the ever hardworking Awaritefe.

Two minutes before half-time Casserly cut inside Olympic's left midfielder Steve Eagleton to unleash a hot drive from 25 metres, but a fully stretched Catlin turned the missile away for a corner.

Vlado Zoric looked certain to score on the first post just before the break but again Marconi was denied by the courageous Catlin.

Eight minutes after the break Catlin once more saved Olympic by racing off his line to block a threatening Maloney bursting into the box.

Marconi's Brendan Renaud crossed in the 62nd minute but Longo's crashing header shaved the far post.

The Olympic custodian again denied Marconi on the edge of the box when Awaritefe had burst

Olympic's depleted defence.

Ironically in the last minute Olympic could have stolen the match but for some selfish play upfront. Peter Tsekenis released Tome to streak away but although Tsekenis had backed up for a return ball was denied such a chance, and seconds later Brett Emerton went wide of the right post with his left footed low drive even though Tome this time was free on his left.

Zoran Matic reflected after the match: "My players created many chances so I can sleep even though we did not win. If we create that many chances and still fail to score from them we have fallen into their hands. We had enough chances in fact to win three games but good luck to Olympic as they responded



Bobby Catlin: Olympic's hero.

MARCONI: Covic, Casserly, Babic (Tomich 89), Longo, Kim, Renaud, Mendez, Ansaldi (Care 76), Zoric, Maloney, Awaritefe.

OLYMPIC: Catlin, Carter, Barbalace, de Marigny, Augerinos (Rastall 88), Emerton, Tsekenis, Juric, Eagleton, Tome, Bayhan (Hristodoulou 74).

SCORERS
Marconi: Maloney 31
Olympic: Juric 21

CROWD: 6,367

POY
3 Catlin (SO)
2 Awaritefe (MF)
1 Maloney (MF)



ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports



THE ICEMAN COMETH

GIPPSLAND FALCONS.....1 MELBOURNE KNIGHTS.....2

By Damian Tripodi

In a gritty Victorian derby on a balmy evening, Gippsland Falcons, Melbourne Knights took the three precious points by defeating a gallant Gippsland Falcons 2-1 on Saturday.

Just as the game appeared to be heading for a 1-1 draw, Knights sub Ice 'The Iceman' Kutlesovski popped up, courtesy of a defensive lapse, to score the Knights' winner with just three minutes left.

As expected the game was a hard fought encounter, with tight man-to-man marking the order of the day.

Knights coach Ken Worden stated after the match that he

deliberately slowed the game down, mainly due to the hot conditions. "We didn't want a running game and we were also aware that Frank (Arok) desperately wanted three wins in a row, so we did everything to stop it."

In the opening minutes new Falcons star, Archie Thompson, had a header that brought out the best from Knights keeper Joe Didulica.

The Falcons' Olyroo was again in the action several minutes later, but unlike his recent rich vein of goal scoring, couldn't find an avenue through a Knights defence led by the tough skipper Andrew Marth (playing his 250th NSL game).

After 23 minutes Knights

took advantage of a piece of lazy Gippsland defending which allowed Ponderjak, with lots of room on the right, to strike the ball cleanly to the top left corner of the net.

At this stage the Falcons were slow in moving back and were constantly counter-attacked by the clever Knights.

In a tactical move, perhaps in response to this, coach Arok replaced Falcons defender Claudio Canosa (who appeared to be carrying an injury) for the skilful Doug Marcina in the 35th minute.

Marcina put a spark in the game, created several opportunities and the home side lifted a notch as a result.

Arok's half-time address (or blast!) could be heard from

the outer stand, and consequently, his charges lifted their game noticeably in the second stanza.

The Falcons were moving forward in numbers and after having been on the ground for only two minutes, diminutive striker Joe Tricarico, to the delight of the large Falcons support, equalised for Gippsland. However the dream of a third consecutive win was dashed by the coming of the 'Iceman' Ice Kutlesovski in game's dying stages.

A disappointed Frank Arok stated that his team had missed the boat. "We had a big chance to move up the ladder and it has gone. We had good scoring opportunities in the early minutes of the first



Andrew Marth: His 250th NSL game was a successful one for his Knights.

half but couldn't finish and our defence was poor."

Naturally Ken Worden was happy with the result. "We did what we had to do. We had

the more chances, our attacking down the middle and we defended well."

FALCONS: Kourtis, Bell, Canosa (Marcina 35), Gotis, Sekulic (Tricarico 60), Foy, Hastie, Osman, Tsatsas, Palamaras, Thompson (Mitroulas 80).

KNIGHTS: Joe Didulica, Kovacevic, Jolic, Banini, Marth, Ponderjak (Kutlesovski 76), Kelic, (Trupkovic) Nastevski, Susa, John Didulica, Deak.

SCORERS
Falcons: Tricarico 62
Knights: Ponderjak 23, Kutlesovski 87

CROWD: 4,385

POY
3 Deak (MK)
2 Foy (GF)
1 Marth (MK)

COSMOS' EIGHT PART GREEK TRAGEDY!

CANBERRA COSMOS.....8 UTS OLYMPIC 1

By Nick Guoth

Canberra Cosmos put on a spectacular of goals to overwhelm UTS Olympic 8-1 in the Monday game at Seiffert Oval last week (a round 14 fixture).

The result was the best on record for Cosmos and the worst ever for Olympic, as the goal avalanche entertained a rapt crowd of over 3,000.

The locals were given the ideal start when Olympic keeper Bob Catlin — still in holiday mode — allowed a 30m shot by Ante Moric to bounce underneath his body for the opening goal just five minutes in.

However, Catlin redeemed himself with some fine saves from shots by Peter Buljan and new signing Tristram

Morgan.

In the 34th minute Dale Wingell pushed the ball forward and Steve Jomaa produced a rather crude tackle to stop him.

Jomaa received his marching orders and from that moment it was all downhill for the Sydneysiders.

Andy Ravanella, formerly of Marconi, sent through 'Man of the Match' Lindsay Wilson, and his excellent finish gave Catlin no chance.

Enter Peter Buljan, stage right. The new Olyroo added Cosmos' third, but early in the second half another Olyroo, Brett Emerton, shot just wide and a few minutes later Steve Eagleton saw his attempt bounce back off the crossbar as Olympic mounted a rearguard action, yet it was all in vain.

Four goals were scored in

the next 20 minutes as Cosmos 'put on a show' for their, by now, ecstatic fans.

First a lovely run through the defence by Moric set-up Buljan whose shot was parried by Catlin, he followed up, collected the ball, rounded the keeper and Buljan slotted it home.

Then a Moric header found Buljan who played a delightful one-two, and his low shot went underneath the advancing Catlin.

Next Danny Barbalace fouled Musitano inside the box and Moric stepped up for the penalty.

His initial soft shot was blocked, but he converted the rebound with considerable élan.

Sub Ilija Prenzovski stole a goal from captain Norman Kelly when he finished off a shot that was already heading

in for goal.

Tome regained a little pride for Olympic with a superb shot fifteen minutes from the bell.

However Prenzovski drew the curtain on the story of Olympic's Greek tragedy a minute before the end when, from 35m out, he superbly chipped Catlin for one of the goals of the season (and his joy was unrestrained).

Cosmos coach Branko Culina said that "tonight it all fell together. We've got some pride back (after the 8-0 thrashing at Wollongong) and regained the faith of the supporters."

But he warned that there was no room for complacency, yet still managed to heap praise on Buljan and Wilson.

What a night for Canberra Soccer and their new Olyroo Peter Buljan.



Ilija Prenzovski: What a goal! What a celebration!

COSMOS: Giannasca, Roberts, Ravanella, Moric (Prenzovski 69), Hunter, Kelly, Buljan, Wilson, Wingell (Haythornwaite 62), Popovich, Morgan (Musitano 45)

OLYMPIC: Catlin, Hristodoulou (Carle 65), Tome, Emerton, De Marigny, Ardane, Barbalace, Jomaa, Eagleton, Petratos (Juric 45), Gonzalez (Larocca 45).

SCORERS
Cosmos: Moric 5,68, Wilson 37, Buljan 41,58,63, Prenzovski 72,89
Olympic: Tome 82

CROWD: 3,063
POY
3 Wilson (CC)
2 Buljan (CC)
1 Ravanella (CC)

MORI: AUSTRALIA'S RONALDO?

ADELAIDE CITY 4 NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0

By Val Migliaccio

Adelaide City powered their way to a convincing 4-0 victory over Newcastle Breakers in the deferred round eight clash at Hindmarsh Stadium last Wednesday.

Zebras striker Damian Mori scored his second hat-trick of the season in this demolition of lowly Newcastle.

Since their return to Hindmarsh the Zebras have been devastating, with Mori scoring seven times at their 'real' home.

Milan Ivanovic was injured and Brad Armour suspended, yet it really didn't matter, while John Kosmina made four changes in the Breakers' squad with Matthew Austin, Liam McGuire and Shaun Edwards in the eleven.

The opening 15 minutes saw the Breakers put the Zebras under pressure without penetrating the Alex Tobin led defence.

The match was 26 minutes old before the first shot on target was recorded — Breakers' keeper Liam Baker was forced into a brilliant save from a Mori shot just outside the box which was created

after he applied immense pressure on Robbie Ironside.

Two minutes later Mori bagged his 101st career goal after the Zebras forced two corners in succession. John Gibson's corner was met by an unmarked Mori on the edge of the six yard box who made no mistake with his header.

The goal of the match came in the 37th minute. Mennillo, Trajanovski and Brooks were involved in a series of passes which cut the Breakers apart, with Brooks finishing the move thanks to a clinical shot which gave Baker no chance. 2-0 to the rampaging Zebras.

Brad Hassell was involved

in many attacking forays and he was dangerous running at the Breakers defence. He could have been on the scoresheet when he outran the Breakers defence but was forced wide and his left foot attempt hit the side netting.

Mori scored his second of the match in the 74th minute when he robbed the Breakers' Paul Ritchie 30 metres out from goal to score from 16 metres.

The best chance of the match for Newcastle fell to substitute Jason Bennett who thundered a free kick just wide of the target.

Mori finished off the night



John Gibson: Cancelled out the Breakers midfield.

with a hat-trick after Trajanovski and Hassell were involved in a series of passes. Hassell unselfishly set up Mori with a pass inside the area which cannoned into the top corner of the net for 4-0.

The Zebras moved up a notch on the ladder to third with three matches still in hand.

The Breakers stayed in Adelaide after the game to prepare for their next match, against Adelaide Sharks (see match report p.10).

They no doubt had some soul searching to do, while Adelaide City are looking ominously dangerous as we begin the descent towards the Finals ... sound familiar?

ZEBRAS: Petkovic, Yates, Tobin, Costanzo, Mori, Hassell (Brazzale 88), Mennillo (Sabljak 77), Gibson, Trajanovski, Brooks (Dodd 69) Thomas.

BREAKERS: Baker, Austin, Pryce (Sprod 77), Ironside, Ritchie (Lane 75), Wilson (Bennett 69), Zane, McGuire, Edwards, Lowe.

SCORERS
City: Mori 28, 73, 84, Brooks 37.

CROWD: 3,000

POY
3 Mori (AC)
2 Yates (AC)
1 Hassell (AC)

Future Star?

Mile Sterjovski may not be a name that jumps straight to mind when thinking of players in the NSL. Unless of course you are a Sydney United fan, and not just because he has just been signed from Wollongong (via the AIS).

Last year in the semi-finals of the Youth League he scored four goals for the AIS against Sydney United, and they still lost!

Mile started his career in Wollongong, where he played representative football for Illawarra for three years before moving onto the Wolves Under/13s and then Under/16s. Finally he made it into the Youth team where he scored around ten goals in about 20 games.

He also appeared in the last two games of the senior side at the end of 1995/96. Sterjovski then got invited to the AIS where, under former Soccerroo Steve O'Connor, he has learnt much about the game. "I refined my runs in the box, my positional play, and generally learnt how to be a better player for the team and for myself."

As well as O'Connor Mile puts much of his success down to previous coach Larry Grassney. "He taught me and inspired me to play my very best. He gave me individual training sessions and was there right through my first grade debut with the Wolves. Without him I probably would not be playing where I am today."

During the off-season Mile played alongside Sydney United's Velimir Kupresak for the Illawarra Lions in the Super League, and big Vel must have given coach 'Mitch' the word for after scoring 23 goals in ten games for the AIS United approached him to play at Parramatta stadium.

He now had to make a choice between Wollongong and United. "It was a big choice, the Wolves wanted me to stay but in the end I felt Sydney United offered me better opportunities.

"After all United to do not have too many strikers and people like Nick (Bosevski) and myself will get our chance very soon. I had heard how well United looked after their junior players and it was all true. All the guys have been great and given me a chance to prove myself. I get to train with the first team and I am really enjoying it."

Good runs and finishing are the strengths he sees in his play, and he would like to be known as a Bergkamp type player (even if he himself supports Manchester United!).

Mind you if he did play even half as well as 'Bergy' has for Arsenal, his aim of playing in Europe will come true.

There would be nothing he would like more than to play at Old Trafford in another United shirt — this time of Manchester. His main idol in world football is Ronaldo, and in the Australian scene he sees John Markovski as a great role model.

After two weeks at Sydney United Sterjovski has already made his debut, off the bench, against Perth Glory at Parramatta Stadium. He has already set himself the goal of starting as many games as possible and disturbing the scoreboard on as many occasions as he can this season.

In terms of Australian representation he aims to make the Australian side for the World Youth Cup in 1999.

Mile Sterjovski is a name that will be around for a while and the Pumas hope he will be as prolific a goal scorer as the likes of Milicic and Zdrilic.

MILE STERJOVSKI

Coach's View:

He has the makings of a very good striker.

Fans' View:

Has a great chance to prove himself this season. His previous goal scoring record speaks for itself



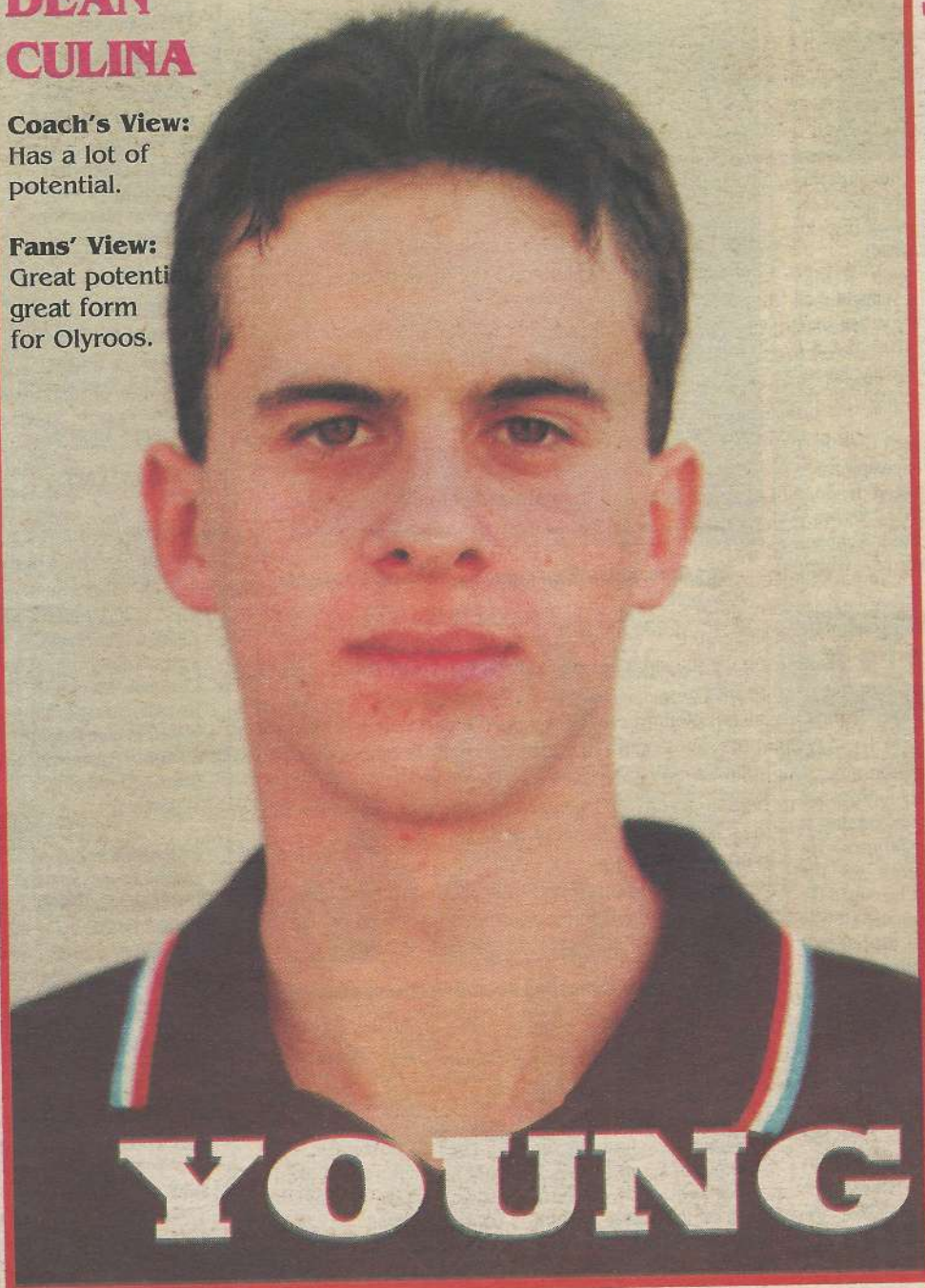
DEAN CULINA

Coach's View:

Has a lot of potential.

Fans' View:

Great potential for Olyroos.



Dean Ready for Big Time

Dean Culina started playing football for Melbourne's St Auburn Saints in a team that turned out to be a very successful one, winning the league on several occasions.

From there he played in the Melbourne Knights' Under/16 team before a return stint with St Auburn. Through his youth days he played with one player that also made it to the NSL — Tom Pondeljak.

Finally it was Dean's turn to make it at Sydney United. Initially he was successful in his trial and moved into the Colts team for six months before spending a full season in the youth team.

Last season he made it into the much lauded Sydney United senior side, and it was in a game he is unlikely to forget.

As he recalls: "It was against Collingwood at Olympic Park in Melbourne, and we were down by a goal to nothing with 25 minutes to go. At the full time whistle the scorecard read: Collingwood Warriors 1 Sydney United 2."

Dean played two full games and came off the bench that one time last season.

"It was a great side last year, we had a lot of fun. There was so much skill on the field you could learn so much from them. Tony Popovic taught me about positional play and being a sweeper, and I played alongside Velimir Kupresak and Mark Babic. I was finally going to make an impact and I thought I would play more this season, but as yet this has not been the case."

Dean, like brother Jason, had to overcome the father/coach factor that so many others talked of. "It really did not bother us. If anything we had to work twice as hard to get a position in the team, there were never any favours done either way by Dad."

Perhaps harder for an older brother to accept would be being overshadowed by his younger brother, but Dean has taken this all in his stride and continues to set out to play at the highest levels of the NSL.

However in any large squad some players miss out and, unfortunately for Dean, he has been one of them. "I am staying motivated by going out to prove that I am better than the guys in the current first team. Then when I do get the chance I have to take it and prove the coach was right in picking me."

"I still enjoy playing though, and I do train with the senior guys. I want to get as far as I can in the game, I am not going to give up. My biggest assets are my skill, vision, and passing."

By the end of his career Dean Culina would like it to be said of him. 'He worked very hard to achieve the aims he set for himself, and overcame the toughest obstacles to be the very best player he could be.'

With such an attitude this 'Young Gun' will be back firing in the NSL very soon, and his first chance will come when he trains with the Olyroos for their upcoming games against Brazil.

Dean is a player steeling himself for the big time, and that's bad news for NSL strikers but good news for the faithful at Parramatta Stadium.

YOUNG

GUNS

Jacob Climbs Ladder of Success

Jacob Burns has become a regular in the remodelled Sydney United of 1998. His rise to the heights of the NSL has been very fast, courtesy of his own talent coupled with the drain of players going overseas.

Burns started his career playing for his local side Greenacre. He played for the Bankstown representative side at the ages of 10 and 11. About this time he was also making his name as a tennis player and at the age of 12 was playing representative soccer and tennis (for NSW). Jacob then had to choose between the two and chose the team game, because "at least if I made a mistake there are always others who can be blamed!"

His choice having been made, Burns moved to the UTS Olympic junior sides before playing for St George's Under/14 and 15s. He then moved to Sydney United where he played for the 16s and then moved straight into the youth team before making his NSL last year against Collingwood. "I remember the game, as we finished up winning the game 7-0, not a bad start to an NSL career."

Along the way Jacob has picked up representative honours ranging from the Under/20 side way back to playing for NSW at the U/13 to U/15 levels.

Also Burns was very handy at indoor soccer and was part of the Australian indoor squad. In the end the outdoor game won and he has just been chosen for the Olyroo squad.

"Olyroo training should be very interesting, playing with all those quality players. There are always a lot of new things to learn as a player," he adds.

The young man is a very versatile player but he likes playing in the midfield. "I always enjoyed playing in midfield and thought I would end up there, saying that, there was a season when I played all the positions in the team bar keeper."

"Wherever I played I like coming forward and being involved in the attacks. I believe in the midfield, I can use my vision and endurance to the greatest effect. In the end though I do not feel foreign playing in any position."

As for the future there are no set plans yet. "Eventually I would love to go overseas and make it big, but that is only if Australian soccer does not lift. If it does and I can make my living here then that would be great. I have travelled with soccer and seen the different cultures and would not mind experiencing them even more. I appreciate teams like Manchester United, Liverpool and Inter Milan, but there are no individuals I look up to specifically, you can learn from many players overseas."

"In the end when others look back on my career I would like to be remembered as a great player who gave his all, whether that be in Australia or overseas for my club, and certainly at the national level."

And certainly if anyone has seen him play this year, he has not looked out of place in a very strong Sydney United side. Jacob has begun his climb on the ladder of success.

ABSW wishes all our 'Young Guns' the very best for success filled careers and hope that everyone in Australian Soccer can get behind the youth of today and our various youth leagues... because they are the future of the game.

JACOB BURNS

Coach's View:

Extremely talented and also a very hard worker.

Fans' View:

Excelled this season and has blended well in the senior team.



Jason's Golden Opportunity

Jason Culina started playing soccer for St Auburn Saints in Melbourne. At that stage his life was influenced by his father, and where Culina senior played, and at that point he was starring in Melbourne. Jason then moved to the Melbourne Knights where he played in their junior teams.

Then there was a return to Sydney (he had left when only a youngster) and for Jason it was a move directly to Sydney United. "I played in the Under/14s and scored 23 goals. Half that season was spent in midfield and the other half as striker. I was also in and out of the Colts side."

"The year after I was playing in the youth team as a midfielder. I always wanted to be a midfielder. I believe my game is suited to the more running and creativity you have in the middle of the park."

The following year Jason Culina made his debut in the senior United team, not that he remembers a great deal of the game. "I value my time on the field last year as that experience means the nerves are less this year and this is important as I have to take on more responsibility in this new look team."

He certainly has fond memories of the team last year. "It was unbelievable the quality of our side last year. The step up from the youth team was at first difficult, there really is a big gap, but it gradually became easier and the old heads around me helped enormously."

Perhaps the hardest obstacle for Jason, from the fans' perspective, was that the senior team was coached by his father. "I did not mind, it was all water off a duck's back, in the end I had as much chance as anyone to make the team on match day. All my coaches taught me aspects of my game. I am good at controlling and passing the ball, influencing the game, but my coaches have helped develop that ability into my play more and more."

"Last season we played a slower passing game but as I did not really play all that often I did not get used to that style."

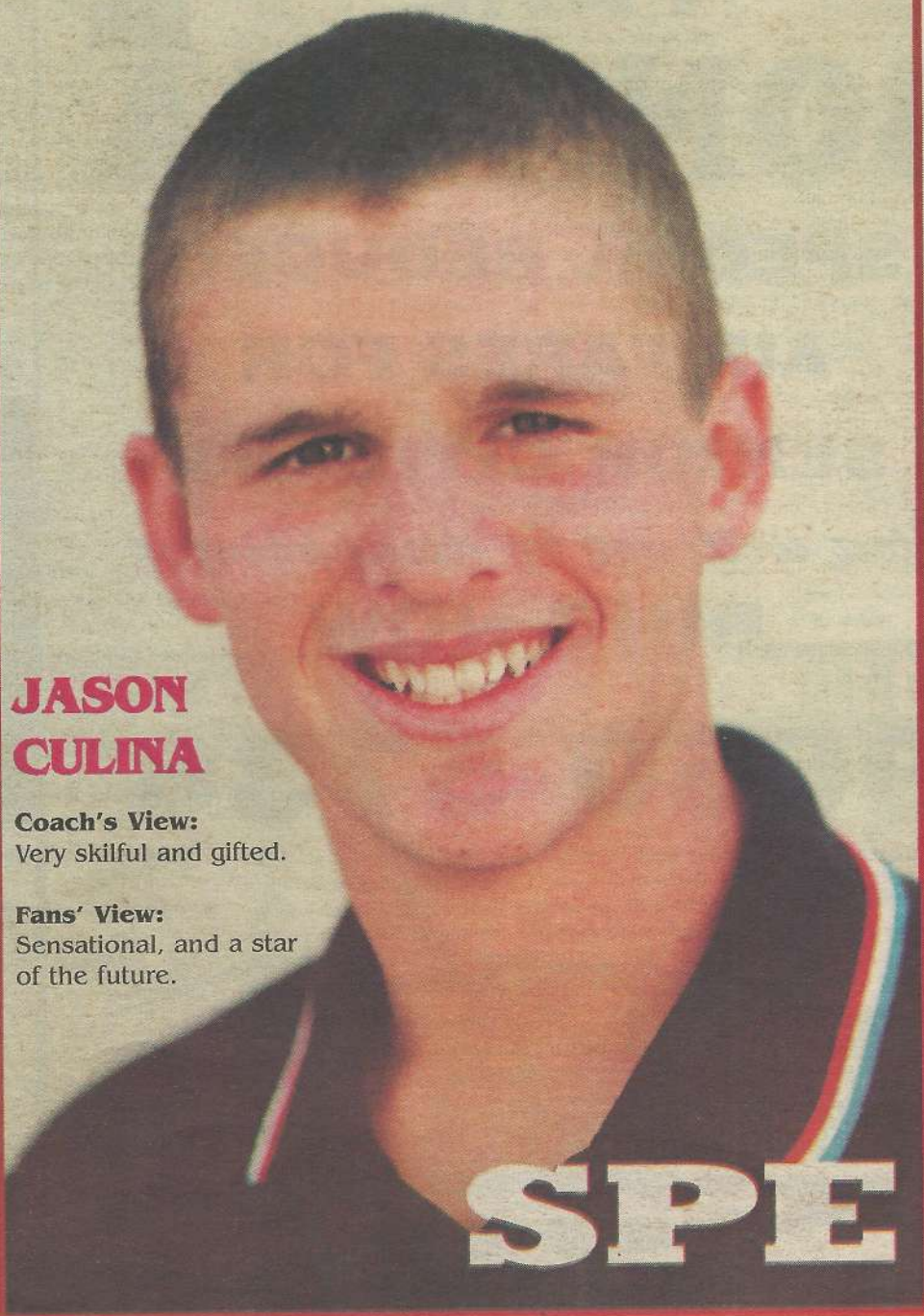
Things are also looking up for Jason on the international front with his selection in the Olyroos squad to take on the Brazilians in March. "It is a great honour, and I think I am the youngest member of the squad, which makes it even more special."

"I hope to be able to have a roving role in the team while learning from the instructions given to me by the coach. My game benefits when my coach gives me directions but also gives me a bit of a free hand on the field."

"I have played in the Under/17s and this will be the next level. To gain experience against international teams has helped me in the past (Jason has played South American and Oceania opposition in his U/17 days) and will certainly help develop my game in the future, at club and country level."

"The Sydney Olympics would certainly be the stuff made of dreams, and would have to be my aim."

Jason Culina's career so far is littered with silver medals and this is one thing he wants to even up, and what better way than a gold medal.



JASON CULINA

Coach's View:

Very skilful and gifted.

Fans' View:

Sensational, and a star of the future.

SPECIAL

By Stuart Jones



Perth Glory chairman Nick Tana, speaking on SBS last week, made his point abundantly clear. All Australian national league clubs have to become privatised and operate purely as businesses, driven by business motives.

Though the notion was



not new (commentators, observers and columnists, including this one, have been saying such things for years), no prominent soccer official has ever put it so bluntly and lucidly before.

Tana simply used the formula of his own club and its remarkable commercial success to drive home his point. The Glory is currently averaging crowds of just under 16,000 per home game — the highest ever NSL average.

I have not been privy to the Glory's books but, with say a thousand non-paying guests, and an average entrance fee of \$10, the club

will bring in around \$2 million through the gate this season. And on top would come sponsorship, memberships and merchandising which, for a club with such a huge following, should be substantial.

Tana says the club broke even in its first season in 1996-97 and expects to make a healthy profit this season. This despite a marketing expenditure



budget of \$750,000. And all that profit will be re-invested into the club as added capital. With such a cash flow, Perth will be able to build the best playing staff in the land and it should not be long before they become prolific winners of championships. This for the youngest football club in the land, run purely as a business. Who could argue with Nick Tana?

Contrast the financial state of Perth Glory with the other 13 clubs who average officially posted home crowds of just over 4,000. Which would translate to an annual gate revenue of around \$450,000. Add, generously, another \$200,000 or so in sponsorships, catering etc. and the average club is dreadfully short of the \$1.5 million expected annual expenditure. In other words the clubs are broke, relying on overdrafts, handouts and benefactors to make ends meet.

So why and how could these clubs have existed for so long? The answer lies in another of Nick Tana's utterings in the SBS interview: most clubs have social agendas not business agendas. Such clubs see themselves primarily as being there to represent their communities, whether that community is geographically or culturally identifiable. And with the community spirit being a club's chief lifeline, money will somehow always come from somewhere to bail them out. But, as Tana would point out, there is no real future in that, even if survival can be

prolonged. There is no hope for expansion or real growth. That can only come via a genuine business agenda.

Of course Nick Tana's club is luckier than most. It's a club which, at the outset, managed to isolate sufficient investors and people with real capital to back its business plan, risking their own money. Such fiscal enthusiasm has been rare in soccer elsewhere. Carlton (AFL) Football Club has



invested heavily in Carlton Soccer Club, which is also run along corporate lines. Now it is likely that Sydney Olympic will go private,



with businessmen Rene Rivkin and Nick Politis vying to buy out its majority shareholding.

Recently Wollongong also rolled ahead with a transformation into a business entity. The other



clubs, by and large, remain socially based entities with no private risk or real business motive.

Ultimately what is required from the clubs is real ambition. On my trip last week to the Football Expo in Singapore — a vast theatre of learning and networking — I noted with regret that only one Australian club, Carlton, was represented. It was not a good reflection of how genuine clubs are in their ambition to expand, grow and move into the future.

Happily, Soccer Australia was also represented, with

league general manager Stefan Kamasz busily attending seminars, learning and establishing contacts in football's vast business world.

The key, says Nick Tana, is that the move toward wide privatisation of league clubs should be centrally driven by Soccer Australia. He wants a firm plan in place which drives, assists and ultimately compels clubs to become privatised.

And I believe he is right. It is time that Soccer Australia put legislation in



place which compels all clubs to be private business entities by a certain time, a certain year. So far, all Soccer Australia has done is welcome clubs like Perth Glory, not coerce or tangibly encourage others to follow its splendid lead.

LETTERS

Continued from Page 6

WHAT IS THE MAIN AIM?

Dear Sir,
I am a regular reader of your publication and, naturally, the 'Letters to the Editor' section.

I am not in the habit of criticising anyone's opinion, but when I read the letter from 'Alex', I could not resist but to answer it. It's no wonder that Alex did not want to publish his full name and address because he is apparently ignorant of the history of the game in this country.

How else can you describe a gentleman who wants the clubs which have produced the best, and most, Australian representative players to be thrown out of the competition. This is something unheard of in the soccer loving world surely?

Even funnier is the suggestion that teams like South Melbourne, Melbourne Knights and Sydney United be replaced by new Australian backed clubs like Granville, Auburn or Western Suburbs, clubs that could have survived even in the amateurish NSW Premier League.

Well give me the name of one Australian international produced over the last 20 years from a so called 'Australian' club.

The players produced at Sydney United, a club 'Alex' wants out of the league, alone amount to: Arnold, M Babic, S Babic, Bilokapic, Bosnich, J Culina, Enes, Foster, Kalac, Milicic, Moric, Plesa, T Popovic, Perosh, Rudan, Savor, Slater, Stanton, Vrkic, Zec, Zelic and Zdrilic. As you can see, two full international teams with some well known names who now ply their trade in the best leagues of the world, and this is only those who have come through the ranks of Sydney United.

The letter would be far too long to mention every player to have come out of the Croatian community but I will add the names

of Viduka, Skoko, Juric, Zabica, Petkovic brothers etc. and a look at the national league this year will find almost every club with a player from a Croatian background, except for the Newcastle Breakers who are sitting at the bottom of the league.

Would somebody please supply a list of any ethnic or so called Australian group which has produced a bigger number of international, or even first division, players.

After all of this, we then have a suggestion to throw clubs out who have produced so many players.

Australian soccer, where are you going?
M Pospishil
Werrington County, NSW.

Editor's note: I feel you have answered your own argument. Two people, irrespective of background, produced each of the players mentioned. These players played for AUSTRALIA! The argument then seems over as it is Australia who produced them, along with their parents, not Croatia, or England, or South America etc. I am from an English background but am proudly Australian. This country didn't ask me to come and live here and certainly should not make exceptions for me, and that goes for ALL who choose to spend their lives here. Without this turning into a debate that will take us away from the essence of the argument, if you are born here or decide to live, work, earn your living, are educated here etc, you are Australian, just as my children are. Never mind where they were born, they may represent their country in the future, God willing, and if they do, should I then point the finger and say that England produced them?

I think not.

EUROPEAN FARE BONANZA

SPECIAL REDUCED

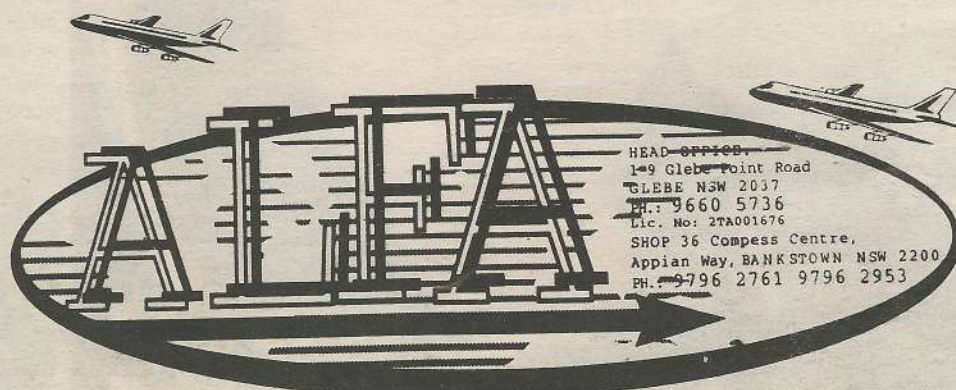
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WOMEN'S WRITES

BY JANENE MAR

SCHOOLGIRLS' TOUR AN EXPERIENCE

The Australian Schoolgirls returned from their 22-day tour to New Zealand and the USA just a week before Christmas, having experienced a valuable trip but with a mixed bag of results.

The side was a relatively young combination with only two having previously gained selection — Alicia Cavanagh and Megan Bond. However, no less than eleven of the team have summer national league experience under their belt.

Coach Greg Best reports the tour to the US was particularly valuable and an eye opener for all to play at the Olympic Training Center in San Diego and to see just how professional the American set-up and players are. The US Under/16 side consisted of a squad of 23 players — all very big, fast and athletic, displaying crisp one-twos and blind passes; a well-drilled outfit.

The tour was also an important cultural and social experience with the Australians billeted out to families as well as spending time at places such as the Grand Canyon and Disneyland.

The team assembled in Sydney two days prior to jetting off overseas, and in preparation played two Women's State League teams in Penrith United and Sydney United; notching up wins over both.

Kicking off the tour in Auckland, the Aussies made a disappointing start, going down to New Zealand in both internationals, despite clearly being the better side.

RESULTS:

26 Nov
v Penrith United
4-2
(Scorers: Garriock 2, Bond, Hensman)

★ ★ ★

27 Nov
v Sydney United
2-0
(Baker, Poulton)

★ ★ ★

29 Nov
v New Zealand U/17
0-1

New Zealand made a strong start to the match, and were rewarded with the early goal ten minutes in. The Australian defence was caught square from a good Kiwi ball up the centre from midfield, the striker taking the ball in and slotting the shot past the keeper.

The goal startled the visitors into action, but to little effect. With intermittent showers throughout the game, the Aussies needed to play the ball more to feet, and were not strong enough in the tackle or to the ball quickly enough.

The second half began with two good chances in the first two minutes, but not converted. The error rate continued with poor passing, and a lack of shape and defensive commitment.

★ ★ ★

1 Dec
v New Zealand U/17
1-2

After the disappointment of the first up loss, the Australians were keen to make amends, and showed good preparation for this next clash with the Kiwis.

But early on the Aussies put themselves under pressure with some unnecessary delaying play at the back, allowing the home side to get a foot in.

Defender Neisha Klessattel fouled inside the box in the 7th minute, keeper Cassandra Kell saving the resulting penalty, only to be pulled up for early movement, and the Kiwis scored from the second attempt.

Just three minutes later Australia equalised, a great sweeping move saw the ball switched diagonally across to Heather Garriock in space on the left before she drilled the ball home from the corner of the box.

Some great football and pleasing intensity from the Australians ensued for the visitors to take control of the game and force errors from the Kiwis, but scoring opportunities broke down with the final pass or hesitation in shooting.

Then with five minutes remaining, NZ again caught the defence square and scored a telling blow — a very disillusioning end result for Australia.

★ ★ ★

3 Dec
v San Pedro
3-1

Playing this high school team was expected to be a relatively easy task, but it turned out to be far from it. San Pedro played a very quick, physical and direct game, and Australia had to work very hard to establish authority with the chopped up and tiny pitch not helping.

Although Heather Garriock scored the early goal, the Aussie defence was lacking and San Pedro were able to equalise when a cross from the left was missed by all but the striker.

Numerous positional changes for the second half made for a more effective Aussie combination, and finally after consistent pressure and hard work, the rewards came.

Neisha Klessattel put the ball in the net after Tracy Baker's run through the centre saw her shot parried. Immediately after, a sweeping move through the middle was neatly finished with Garriock's second goal.

★ ★ ★

4 Dec
v Southern California Blues
1-1

The Aussies had difficulty containing the fast, physical and skilful senior opposition from the start. The Californians' quick, short passing game had the visitors chasing, and the Americans took the lead after 14 minutes, the Aussies not tracking back as the ball was taken wide and the cross easily converted. The one and two-touch passing was wearing down the Australians.

Another Blues shot hit the post, and keeper Lynn White denied the home team with some good saves.

The second half saw the Aussies show greater purpose, with good running and better shape, to gradually claw their way back into the match. Kate Hensman worked her way into the box and was fouled, and White stepped up to neatly slot home the penalty.

Hensman had another open goal chance, but sent the ball wide. The draw against this champion senior team was a very pleasing result and an entertaining game.

★ ★ ★

10 Dec
v Auto Traders SC
0-3

After a six day break, the Aussies were faced with a cold night, a rough playing surface, and numerous injuries. Auto Traders — a senior team at the top of their league — were big, strong and fast, and the visitors found themselves two goals down after the opening 15 minutes, both the result of poor marking and tracking of runners through the midfield.

Slow to recover after losing the ball, the Aussies were also trying to play impossible passes when in possession, and the strikers received poor service. Play improved over the course of the game, with good running to the end, but the errors with passing persisted.

The third goal was conceded near the end, a fluent move up the wing ending with a cross reaching an unmarked striker who struck from inside the six-yard box.

★ ★ ★

12 Dec
v USA U/16
1-3

Match preparation for this first international against the USA

Under/16s was encouraging, and the team finally played on a top pitch plus a good atmosphere at the Olympic Training Center.

A disastrous start to the game when a defensive error saw the ball played straight back into the centre allowing the US striker to collect and easily score. The Americans' classy strength on the ball, one and two-touch passing and support runs were catching the Australians' defence out.

In the 23rd minute, Amanda Poulton worked her way into the box and was taken down, but White could only find the woodwork from the penalty shot.

The Aussies started combining some better passages in attack, and take the game to the US. A movement initiated from defence, had Debbie Trubee carry the ball into the US half, then played diagonally to Heather Garriock wide on the left. Her low cross found Alicia Cavanagh whose first time shot hit the back of the net from 20 metres for the equaliser.

Very much in the game at the break, the Aussies' joy was soon deflated as the home side converted two goals in the first 20 minutes after resumption, both scored from lack of numbers in the Aussies' defensive play. The team fought on and tried to hit back, but the USA's strength and technical skill proved too much as the visitors tired noticeably.

★ ★ ★

14 Dec
v USA U/16
0-2

The girls from down under were pumped up for the second international against the US, and adopted a 4-4-2 formation to try and nullify the US attack as well as give themselves more strength in midfield.

Australia started very well but again a defensive error in the 13th minute saw the ball given away in the danger zone, the ball then slotted square for a great US goal from 20 metres.

Despite the early setback, the Australians remained determined to take the game to the USA, making aggressive runs, and passing early and to feet. Immediately after the break an impressive fluid move down the right saw Alicia Cavanagh lay the ball into Amanda Poulton's path, and she cracked a volley straight to the keeper.

The visitors kept up the raids in attack but just could not manage to hit the target, and as they pushed harder, the US countered up the left and a

neat ball across the face of goal was tapped in.

A disappointing result for the team but a much improved performance.

★ ★ ★

16 Dec
v Phoenix Colleges
3-0

A travel mix-up saw the Australians arriving at the small and poorly grassed pitch just 20 minutes before kick-off on a ver cold night. However the Aussies pushed the ball around nicely throughout the match.

The Phoenix keeper, who played liked a second sweeper, shut down raid after raid and made some outstanding saves. In the 14th minute, Amanda Poulton was

released through a gap but her shot was tipped onto the post and out.

Then in the 23rd minute, Alicia Cavanagh played a fine square ball to Kate Hensman who was challenged in the box, and Tracy Baker slammed home the rebound. Repeated attacks were repelled until the 60th minute, Hensman carried the ball through the middle and was tackled just outside the box.

Azra Parker picked up the rebound and from 20 metres found the roof of the net. Soon after, Baker moved up the left and neatly curled her shot past the advancing keeper at the near post.

... All in all a great learning experience for the Aussie girls and one which stands them in good stead for the future.

THE ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES RECOMMENCES 23-25 JANUARY IN CANBERRA. IT WILL FEATURE THE CROSS-OVER ROUND WHICH SEES ALL SIX TEAMS FROM THE TWO POOLS BATTLE AGAINST EACH OTHER.



Action from the Ansett Australia Summer Series: SA's tiny 13 year old midfielder Stacey Stocco (right) holds firm against Victoria's Zoe Nolan (left).

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLGIRLS SQUAD 1997

Tracy Baker	Cardiff HS	NSW
Megan Bond	Nth Bundaberg SHS	QLD
Alicia Cavanagh	Westfield Sports HS	NSW
Danielle Clarke	Pennant Hills HS	NSW
Kristine Collins	Westfield Sports HS	NSW
Karen Dickinson	Orange HS	NSW
Heather Garriock	Westfield Sports HS	NSW
Kate Hensman	Pymble Ladies College	NSW
Tal Karp	Perth College	WA
Cassandra Kell	Corpus Christi College	NSW
Neisha Klessattel	Bossley Park HS	NSW
Azra Parker	Pimlico SHS	QLD
Amanda Poulton	Riverstone HS	NSW
Kate Stork	Wavell SHS	QLD
Debbie Trubee	Gepps Cross Girls HS	SA
Lynn White	Norwood Morialta HS	SA

Coach:		
Greg Best	Griffith HS	NSW
General Manager:		
Christine Hunt	Nerang SHS	QLD
Asst Coach:		
Geoff Stanmore	Portland Central School	NSW
Manager:		
Ian Johnson	Kambah HS	ACT
Sports Trainer:		
Rob Laws		NSW

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Around the Globe

ENGLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Two goals from Ryan Giggs gave Manchester United a 2-0 win over injury hit Tottenham Hotspur, increasing United's chances of the title and Spurs' relegation worries.

Both of Giggs' goals came from David Beckham crosses, with the Welshman scoring with a fierce drive after 44 minutes and adding a second with a header on 67 minutes.

The victory moved United on to 49 points from 22 matches, seven points clear of Chelsea, who moved into second place with a 3-1 win over Coventry.

Tottenham remain 19th, two points clear of bottom-placed Barnsley, and two behind 18th-placed Bolton.

Meanwhile Liverpool kept in touch with the leading pack courtesy of a 2-0 win over Wimbledon, thanks to two second-half goals from Jamie Redknapp, while Arsenal moved above Leeds and into fifth place with a 2-1 win over their former manager George Graham's team at Highbury. Dutch players grabbed all three goals with Marc Overmars scoring twice and a Jimmy Floyd Hassalbank goal sandwiched in between for Leeds. West Ham were the biggest winners of the day crushing bottom placed Barnsley 6-0 at Upton Park.

Both goalscorers in the 1-1 draw between Aston Villa and Leicester struck against their former clubs. Ex-Villa man Garry Parker giving Leicester a 53rd minute lead from the penalty spot and ex-Leicester striker Julian Joachim equalising for Villa three minutes from time.

Everton's recent mini-revival continued with them winning for the third time in four league matches, 3-1 at Crystal Palace — still the only team in the entire English League without a home league win this season!

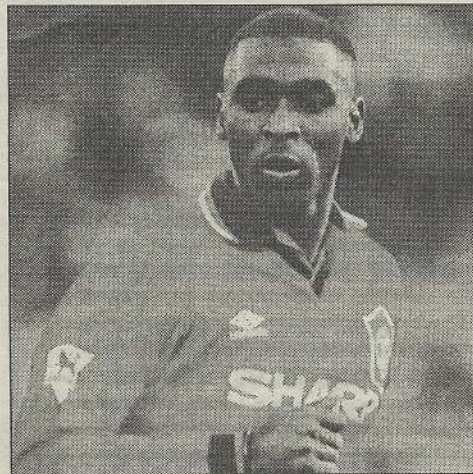
Sheffield Wednesday also eased their relegation fears with a 2-1 win over Newcastle, who have now lost four successive league games. Bolton drew 0-0 with Southampton, who had hothead Francis Benali sent off after 31 minutes for flicking Jason Wilcox in the face — the tenth time he has been dismissed in as many seasons at Southampton.

P W D L F A Pts

Man Utd	22	15	4	3	51	16	49
Chelsea	22	13	3	6	49	22	42
B'burn	21	11	8	2	38	21	41
Liverpool	21	12	4	5	38	19	40
Arsenal	21	10	7	4	37	24	37
Leeds	22	10	5	7	31	25	35
West Ham	22	11	1	10	34	32	34
Derby	21	9	5	7	34	28	32
Leicester	22	7	8	7	26	22	29
A Villa	22	7	6	9	26	28	27
Newcastle	21	7	5	9	22	27	26
Shef Wed	22	7	5	10	34	45	26
Soton	22	7	4	11	25	30	25
Wim'don	21	6	6	9	21	26	24
Everton	22	6	5	11	23	32	23
Coventry	22	5	8	9	21	31	23
C Palace	22	5	8	9	21	31	23
Bolton	22	4	10	8	19	33	22
Tott'ham	22	5	5	12	19	39	20
Barnsley	22	5	3	14	19	57	18

L F L C E O T

Hartson (WestHam)	12	1	6	0	0	19
Cole (Man Utd)	11	2	0	5	0	18



Andy Cole: Chasing West Ham's John Hartson.

Vialli (Chelsea)
Sutton (B'burn)
Gallacher (B'burn)

6 2 0 6 0 14
12 0 1 0 0 13
10 2 1 0 0 13

Carlisle 26 4 3 6 15 18 3 2 8 19 25 26
Plymouth 26 4 4 5 21 20 1 6 6 10 18 25
Burnley 26 4 7 2 15 12 1 2 10 10 24 24

DIVISION ONE

Charlton	3	Middlesbrough	0
Huddersfield	5	Oxford Utd	1
Ipswich Town	0	QPR	0
N Forest	2	Port Vale	1
Portsmouth	0	Man City	2
Reading	1	Bury	1
Stockport	1	Bradford	2
Stoke City	0	Birmingham	6
Sunderland	3	Sheff Utd	2
Wolves	5	Norwich	0
Tranmere	0	WBA	0

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

N Forest	26	11	2	1	32	13	5	4	3	13	11	54
M'brough	26	8	2	2	23	8	7	4	3	20	15	51
Charlton	26	10	2	1	29	13	4	3	6	20	21	47
Sunderland	25	7	4	2	23	10	6	3	3	19	14	46
Sheff Utd	26	9	3	0	25	10	3	7	4	17	19	46
Wolves	26	9	4	0	27	11	4	2	7	10	15	45
WBA	26	8	2	3	14	9	4	4	5	13	15	42
B'ham	26	5	4	3	12	7	5	5	4	20	12	39
Stockport	26	8	4	1	28	13	3	1	9	16	24	38
Swindon	25	8	3	2	23	12	3	2	7	9	24	38
Bradford	26	6	5	2	14	12	3	5	5	11	14	37
Norwich	26	5	4	4	13	17	4	2	7	13	22	33
QPR	26	6	5	2	16	11	2	3	8	14	29	32
Ipswich	25	4	4	4	13	12	3	6	4	16	14	31
Reading	26	5	4	5	19	20	2	5	5	6	18	30
Stoke	26	4	3	5	15	21	3	5	6	12	19	29
Man City	26	4	3	6	18	14	3	3	7	13	17	27
Oxford Utd	26	5	4	3	16	12	2	2	10	15	28	27
Hud'field	26	4	3	6	16	17	3	3	7	14	23	27
Port Vale	26	4	4	5	14	13	3	1	9	13	24	26
Tranmere	25	5	4	4	18	14	1	3	8	10	20	25
Crewe	25	3	2	8	13	23	4	2	6	15	17	25
Bury	26	3	7	3	12	13	1	6	6	12	21	25
P'mouth	25	5	2	7	20	25	1	3	7	9	17	23

L F L C O T

Van Hooijdonk (For)	18	1	4	0	23
Phillips (Sun)	13	4	0	0	17
Angell (Stock)	12	2	3	0	17
Mendonca (Cha)	13	1	1	0	15
Johnson (Ips)	12	0	3	0	15

DIVISION TWO

Bournemouth	3	Northampton	0
Brentford	2	Millwall	1
Bristol City	4	Grimsby	1
Burnley	2	Watford	0
Carlisle	5	Southend	0
Luton	3	Blackpool	0
Plymouth	1	Bristol R	2
Preston	1	Gillingham	3
Walsall	3	Chesterfield	2
Wrexham	0	Fulham	3
Wycombe	1	Wigan	2
York City	0	Oldham	0

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Bristol C	26	12	1	1	31	10	5	3	4	17	11	55
Watford	26	8	3	1	21	10	8	4	2	18	8	55
Bristol R	26	5	1	6	19	22	6	6	2	20	17	40
Fulham	26	7	5	1	16	7	4	2	7	17	19	40
N'hampton	26	8	3	2	19	10	2	6	5	11	14	39
Grimsby	25	6	4	2	17	7	4	4	5	15	16	38
Oldham	25	8	4	0	26	12	1	6	6	12	18	37
Gillingham	27	7	3	3	19	14	3	4	7	16	24	37
York	26	8	2	3	18	10	1	8	4	14	19	37
Ches' field	27	6	6	1	15	9	2	7	5	10	13	37
B'mouth	26	7	5	2	19	8	2	4	6	15	21	36
Millwall	25	5	4	4	17	15	5	1	6	13	17	35
Wrexham	25	5	6	2	18	15	3	4	5	13	15	34
Blackpool	26	7	4	2	21	15	2	2	9	13	27	33
Walsall	25	7	4	2	19	10	2	2	8	10	21	33
Wigan	25	6	3	3	25	18	3	2	8	13	20	32
Preston	26	6	2	5	15	12	3	3	7	17	18	32
Luton	26	4	3	7	21	27	4	5	3	11	11	32
Wycombe	26	5	6	2	18	13	2	3	8	15	25	30
Southend	27	5	5	4	18	19	2	1	10	12	34	27
Brentford	27	6	4	3	21	15	0	5	9	7	29	27

Boli (Wal)	11	3	2	3	19
Hayles (Bri R)	14	2	0	0	16
Thorpe (Lu)	13	0	3	0	16
Taylor (Bre)	11	2	3	0	16
Goater (Bri Ci)	14	0	1	0	15

DIVISION THREE

Barnet	0	Rotherham	0
Brighton	0	Swansea	1
Cambridge	2	Scarborough	3
Cardiff City	1	Leyton Orient	0
Darlington	4	Colchester	2
Doncaster	1	Shrewsbury	0
Hartlepool	1	Exeter City	1
Hull City	0	Mansfield	0
Lincoln	1	Chester	3
Rochdale	1	Notts City	2
Scunthorpe	1	Peterborough	3
Torquay	2	Macclesfield	0

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

N County	26	6	4	2	20	13	9	4	1	22	12	53
Peterboro'	26	8	3	2	27	11	4	7	2	21	14	46
Scarboro'	26	9	1	3	24	14	4	3	6	17	23	43
Chester	26	9	4	0	22	5	4	0	9	17	27	43
Rotherham	26	6	3	3	25	21	5	6	3	18	15	42
Barnet	26	7	4	3	22	12	5	2	5	16	18	42
Lincoln	26	5	5	3	15	14	6	4	3	13	14	42
Hartlepool	27	7	7	0	25	12	2	7	4	14	18	41
Exeter	26	5	6	2	18	12	5	5	3	19	16	41
Torquay	26	8	2	3	22	13	3	6	4	15	20	41
Leyton	26	7	3	3	22	10	3	4	6	11	13	37
M'field	25	9	3	0	21	6	0	6	7	12	23	36
Colchester	26	7	3	3	22	15	2	4	7	20	28	34
Scunthorpe	25	4	4	5	15	18	5	2	5	16	16	33
Cardiff	25	3	9	2	13	13	3	5	3	11	11	32
Cambridge	26	6	4	3	23	18	1	6	6	13	18	31
Mansfield	26	5	6	2	25	17	2	4	7	9	14	31
Shrewsbury	25	7	0	5	20	17	1	6	6	16	21	30
Darlington	25	7	5	1	26	15	0	3	9	8	23	29
Rochdale	27	8	1	4	23	9	1	1	12	8	27	29
Swansea	26	3	4	5	9	11	4	0	10	15	29	25
Hull	26	5	4	4	24	21	1	1	11	13	28	23
Brighton	26	1	5	8	11	21	3	4	5	11	15	21
Doncaster	25	2	3	7	8	26	0	3	10	9	39	12

L F L C O T

Quinn (Pet)	17	3	1	1	22
Whitehall (Man)	14	1	0	1	16
Carruthers (Pet)	13	2	1	0	16
Rowbotham (Exe)	14	1	0	0	15
Glover (Rot)	12	1	0	0	13

SCOTLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Dundee Utd	1	Kilmarnock	1
Hibernian	1	Dunfermline	0
Motherwell	1	Celtic	1
Rangers	2	Aberdeen	0

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Rangers	21	9	2	0	35	11	4	4	2	18	12	45
Celtic	21	7	1	2	22	5	6	2	3	15	9	42
Hearts	20	7	1	2	25	16	6	1	3	19	10	41
Kilmarnock	21	5	1	4	12	14	3	4	4	11	21	29
St Johnstone	20	4	2	4	10	13	3	3	4	11	13	26
Dundee Utd	21	4	4	2	17	8	2	3	6	14	24	25
Dunfermline	21	2	5	4	12	17	3	1	6	10	22	2
Motherwell	21	2	3	5	10	14	3	2	6	15	23	20
Aberdeen	21	3	4	4	12	14	3	3	6	9	22	11
Hibernian	21	4	3	4	20	16	0	3	7	6	19	13

Around the Globe

GREECE

Olympiakos	4	Veria	1
Pyrgos	0	Panathinaikos	0
PAOK	1	Athinaikos	0
Kalamata	1	OFI	0
Apollon	0	Heraklis	0
Proodeftiki	2	Ethnikos	3
Panahaiki	2	Kavala	0
Panionios	2	Ionikos	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEK	16	14	1	1	35	14	43
Olympiakos	17	14	1	2	45	14	43
Pan'aikos	17	13	1	3	40	15	40
PAOK	17	11	4	2	33	16	37
Ionikos	17	10	3	4	29	17	33
Iraklis	17	8	4	5	20	18	28
Iraklion	17	7	3	7	21	32	24
Apollon	17	7	3	7	18	20	24
Xanthi	16	7	2	7	31	31	23
Paniliakos	17	5	5	7	23	27	20
Panionios	17	6	2	9	21	23	20
Panahaiki	17	6	1	10	17	29	19
Proodeftiki	17	4	4	9	17	32	16
Piraeus	17	5	1	11	10	22	16
Veria	17	4	2	11	20	32	14
Athinaikos	17	3	3	11	13	26	12
Kalamata	17	3	3	11	9	24	12
Kavala	17	2	3	12	20	37	9

ITALY

Francesco Moriero struck a superb solo goal as Serie A leaders **Inter Milan** bounced back from a midweek cup drubbing with a morale-boosting 1-0 Italian league win at **Piacenza** on Sunday. Moriero calmed the nerves after his side's humiliating 5-0 Italian cup quarter final first leg defeat to neighbours AC Milan with a breathtaking 25-metre run in the 69th minute. The midfielder rounded three defenders before placing a diagonal shot beyond 'keeper Matteo Sereni. The victory kept Inter, still unbeaten in the league with 36 points from 15 matches, four points clear of second-placed **Juventus**. The champions condemned **Vicenza** to their fourth successive defeat with a first-half penalty from Alessandro Del Piero and a second-half **Ciro Ferrara** header. Fourth-placed **Parma** lost ground on the leading group with a 5-2 thrashing at **Sampdoria**, for whom Giuseppe Signori scored twice, his first goals since joining the club in December from Lazio. **AC Milan** and **AS Roma** played out a scoreless draw at the San Siro, allowing Lazio to leap-frog over both into fifth-spot with a 4-0 home win over **Lecce**.

Bari	0	Atalanta Bergamo	0
Brescia	1	Fiorentina	3
Empoli	0	Bologna	0
Juventus	2	Vicenza	0
Lazio	4	Lecce	0

AC Milan	0	AC Roma	0
Piacenza	0	Inter Milan	1
Sampdoria	5	Parma	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Milan	15	11	3	1	31	13	36
Juventus	15	9	5	1	33	12	32
Udinese	14	9	2	3	28	23	29
Parma	15	7	5	3	27	16	26
Lazio	15	7	4	4	26	14	25
Fiorentina	15	6	6	3	33	17	24
AS Roma	15	6	6	3	25	16	24
AC Milan	15	6	6	3	19	13	24
Sampdoria	15	6	5	4	30	28	23
Vicenza	15	5	3	7	18	30	18
Bologna	15	3	7	5	22	23	16
Bari	15	4	4	7	12	23	16
Empoli	15	4	3	8	21	28	15
Brescia	15	4	2	9	19	27	14
Piacenza	15	2	7	6	12	20	13
Atalanta	15	3	4	8	14	25	13
Lecce	15	3	2	10	12	30	11
Napoli	14	1	2	11	12	36	5

SPAIN

Athletic Bilbao moved up to fourth position in the Spanish first division on Sunday after a solitary **Julen Guerrero** goal ended the unbeaten home record of fifth-placed **Espanyol**. Athletic have 35 points and climb over Espanyol and **Atletico Madrid**, who drew 1-1 in Saturday's derby game with neighbours **Real**. Real were in second place, level on 40 points with **Barcelona**.

Celta Vigo went down 1-0 at **Zaragoza** while a late **Djalminha** strike gave **Deportivo La Coruna** victory over fellow strugglers **Tenerife** by the same score. **Valladolid's** game at **Real Betis** was postponed until March as a mark of respect for Valladolid president **Marcos Fernandez**, who died on Friday.

Merida	2	Oviedo	1
Real Zaragoza	1	Celta Vigo	0
Espanyol	0	Athletic Bilbao	1
Salamanca	0	Racing Santander	0
Deportivo Coruna	1	Tenerife	0
Sporting Gijon	0	Compostela	2
Atletico Madrid	1	Real Madrid	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	18	13	1	4	41	24	40
R Madrid	20	11	7	2	35	18	40
R Sociedad	19	9	8	2	26	12	35
Ath Bilbao	20	9	8	3	30	21	35
Atl Madrid	20	9	7	4	42	26	34
Espanyol	20	8	8	4	27	14	32
Celta Vigo	20	9	4	7	30	25	31
Real Betis	18	8	5	5	26	25	29
Zaragoza	20	7	7	6	30	34	28
Mallorca	19	7	6	6	26	18	27
Oviedo	20	5	9	6	20	26	24
Santander	20	6	6	8	21	24	24
Merida	20	6	5	9	19	28	23
Deportivo	20	4	10	6	20	23	22
Valencia	19	6	3	10	21	25	21
Salamanca	20	5	6	9	17	24	21
Compostela	20	4	8	8	25	34	20
Valladolid	19	5	5	9	17	27	20

Tenerife	20	4	6	10	16	31	18
Gijon	20	0	3	17	16	46	3

FRANCE

Paris SG	2	Strasbourg	1
Nantes	1	Lens	0
Metz	1	Rennes	0
Monaco	0	Cannes	1
Lyon	2	Marseille	1
Chateauroux	3	Auxerre	2
Bordeaux	2	Bastia	0
Toulouse	1	Le Havre	0
Guingamp	1	Montpellier	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metz	22	13	6	3	35	18	45
Paris SG	22	13	5	4	36	19	44
Monaco	22	13	2	7	34	22	41
Marseille	21	11	4	6	27	16	37
Lens	22	11	4	7	30	25	37
Bordeaux	22	9	8	5	28	24	35
Auxerre	22	10	3	9	38	32	33
Lyon	22	10	2	10	26	25	32
Bastia	22	7	8	7	22	19	29
Toulouse	22	7	7	8	19	26	28
Montpellier	22	6	9	7	22	24	27
Nantes	22	7	5	10	21	26	26
Guingamp	21	6	6	9	20	25	24
Le Havre	22	4	10	8	19	24	22
Chat'roux	21	6	4	11	21	34	22
Strasbourg	22	5	6	11	23	31	21
Cannes	21	6	2	13	20	36	20
Rennes	22	4	5	13	21	36	17

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1986 ARGENTINA
1990 GERMANY
1994 BRAZIL

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7 Match Category 3	4,577	5,640	6,400
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• Transfers to and from Airports
• Hotel Accommodation
• Intercity Transfers by either Air or
• Luxury Coach
• Fully Escorted

Package (Prices per person)	Tourist	Superior Tourist	First Class
8 Match Category 3	5,967	6,567	7,368
8 Match Category 2	6,450	7,257	7,857
8 Match Category 1	7,497	8,297	8,897
Single Supplement	1,280	1,920	2,560

'First & Second' Round Championship (inc. Finals)

The Package Includes:
• Fully Escorted
• Return Economy Airfares
• 11 Stadium Tickets - 1st and 2nd
Round
• Quarter & Semi Final Matches - 1st,
2nd, 3rd & 4th Place Finals
• Transfers to and from Airports &
• Stadiums
• Hotel Accommodation
• Intercity Transfers by either Air or
• Luxury Coach
• Fully Escorted

Package (Prices per person)	Tourist	Superior Tourist	First Class
15 Match Category 3	7,886	10,607	11,976
15 Match Category 2	8,625	11,282	12,882
15 Match Category 1	9,680	12,559	14,159
Single Supplement	2,560	3,840	5,120

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SOUTH AMERICA

— Compiled by MARIO ETCHART —



The 'Best Of The Best' — It's Salas

For the past twelve years the Uruguayan newspaper 'El Pais' (The Country), one of the most prestigious in the world, carried out a pool among the 170 most important Soccer journalists in Latin America and Europe, to select the best players, clubs and coaches in each continent.

The pool, endorsed by FIFA is recognised and respected by all sport publications, attracting influential personalities in the world of football.

In 1997 Marcelo Salas, the brilliant Chilean national team striker, who plays for Argentine champion River Plate was distinguished as the 'Americas' Player of the Year'.

Salas, one of the most prolific

scorers in the continent, who is wanted by some of the most powerful clubs in the world, won the award by the biggest margin in the history of the pool — 38 points, beating among others Peruvian international defender Nolberto Solano, flamboyant Paraguayan international goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert, compatriot Celso Ayala, and Uruguayan captain Enzo Francescoli, who also plays for River Plate.

Among the coaches Argentine tactician Daniel Alberto Passarella was the winner followed very closely by Brazilian Paulo Cesar Capegiani, currently in charge of the Paraguayan national team.



Marcelo Salas: 'Americas' Player of the Year'.

AMERICA'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR FINAL STANDINGS

Marcelo Salas (Chile)	87
Nolberto Solano (Peru)	39
Jose Luis Chilavert (Paraguay)	37
Celso Ayala (Paraguay)	36
Marcelo Gallardo (Argentina)	35
Enzo Francescoli (Uruguay)	28
Denilson (Brazil)	27
Jorge Bermudez (Colombia)	26
Leonardo Astrada (Argentina)	23
Edmundo (Brazil)	23
Francisco Arce (Paraguay)	22
Roberto Palacios (Peru)	20
Javier Margas (Chile)	16
Carlos Valderrama (Colombia)	16
Alex Aguinaga (Ecuador)	14

AMERICA'S COACH OF THE YEAR FINAL STANDINGS

Daniel Alberto Passarella (Argentina)	27
Paulo Cesar Carpegiani (Brazil)	26
Ramon Diaz (Argentina)	20
Juan Carlos Oblitas (Peru)	14
Rene Simoes (Brazil)	3
Gustavo Benitez (Paraguay)	3
Mario Zagallo (Brazil)	3
Jose Pekerman (Argentina)	2
Paulo Autuori (Brazil)	2
Nelson Acosta (Uruguay)	2
Hernan Dario Gomez (Colombia)	1
Wanderley Luxemburgo (Brazil)	1
Manuel Lapuente (Mexico)	1
Bora Milutinovic (Yugoslavia)	1
Sergio Markarian (Uruguay)	1
Victor Pua (Uruguay)	1

Ronaldo Europe's Best

Meanwhile in the 'old Continent', South American players figured prominently. The European Soccer journalists selected Brazilian international striker Ronaldo, who plays for Italian giant Inter Milan, as the '1997 European Player of the Year', while his compatriot, Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos from Real Madrid, is among the top ten.

Ronaldo, with 75 points, beat Spanish international striker Raul Gonzalez, who finished second with 32 points.



Ronaldo: '1997 European Player of the Year'.

STANDINGS

Ronaldo (Brazil)	75
Raul Gonzalez (Spain)	32
Paolo Maldini (Italy)	25
Zinedine Zidane (France)	23
Roberto Carlos (Brazil)	21
Lilian Thuram (France)	20
Fernando Hierro (Spain)	19
Peter Scheichel (Denmark)	14
Christian Panucci (Italy)	14
Denis Bergkamp (Holland)	12
Ciro Ferrara (Italy)	11

Top Clubs

According to the International Football Federation of History and Statistics (IFFHS), Chilean champion Colo Colo, Argentine champion River Plate and Uruguay's champion Penarol, are among the best ten clubs in the world.

Spanish club Barcelona jumped from third place to the top at the end of 1997

with 346 points, followed by European and Toyota Cup champions Borussia Dortmund of Germany with 308 points and Juventus of Italy, in third place with 306.

The surprise, among the South American clubs is Colo Colo's fifth position, ahead of Argentine and South American Supercup champions River Plate of Argentina and Penarol of Uruguay.

BEST CLUBS AND PLAYERS

COUNTRY	CLUB	PLAYER
Argentina	River Plate	Marcelo Salas (River Plate)
Brazil	Vasco da Gama	Edmundo (Vasco da Gama)
Guyana	Pele	Anthony Stanton (Western Tigers)
Uruguay	Penarol	Marcelo Zalayeta (Penarol)
Puerto Rico	Academy Quintana	Anselmo Adorno (A. Quintana)
Paraguay	Olimpia	Gabriel Gonzalez (Olimpia)
Guatemala	Comunicaciones	Juan Plata (Municipal)
Mexico	Cruz Aul	Ramon Ramirez (Guadalajara)
Honduras	Olimpia	Wilmer Velazquez (Olimpia)
Trinidad & Tobago	Defense Force	Terry Lewis (Geo Public)
Chile	Colo Colo	Ivo Basay (Colo Colo)
Ecuador	Barcelona	Ariel Graziani (Emelec)
United States	Washington DC	Jaime Moreno (Washington DC)
Costa Rica	Alajuelense	Mauricio Wright (Saprissa)
Peru	Sporting Cristal	Jorge Soto (Sporting Cristal)
Venezuela	Atletico Zulia	Juan Garcia (Atletico Zulia)
Bermuda	Vasco da Gama	Kentoine Jennings (Vasco da Gama)
Nicaragua	Dirianguen	Jose M Bermudez (Dirianguen)
Cuba	Villa Clara	Lazaro Darcourt (Pinar del Rio)
Bolivia	Bolivar	Luis Cristaldo (Bolivar)
Colombia	Deportivo Cali	Ivan Cordoba (Atletico Nacional)
Jamaica	Seba	Theodore Withmore (Seba)
El Salvador	Alianza	Wilfredo Iraeta (Aguila)
Panama	Tauro	Ruben Guevara (Tauro)
Barbados	Notredeme	Llewelyn Riley (Notredeme)
Dominican Republic	Don Bosco	Sandy Lay (Villa Tapia)
Canada	Montreal Impact	Nick de Santis (Montreal Impact)

THE STANDINGS

1. Barcelona (Spain)	346
2. Borussia Dortmund (Germany)	308
3. Juventus (Italy)	306
4. Inter Milan (Italy)	273
5. Colo Colo (Chile)	265
6. Schalke (Germany)	256
7. River Plate (Argentina)	255
8. Paris Saint Germain (France)	249
9. Manchester United (England)	248
10. Penarol (Uruguay)	247
11. Gremio (Brazil)	247
12. Monaco (France)	230
13. Parma (Italy)	226
14. Bayern Munich (Germany)	224
15. Bayern Leverkusen (Germany)	214

OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN CLUBS

23. Velez Sarsfield (Argentina)	206
26. Atletico Mineiro (Brazil)	199
30. Vasco da Gama (Brazil)	184
33. Atletico Nacional (Colombia)	182
37. Flamengo (Brazil)	176
42. Racing Club (Argentina)	169
47. Sporting Cristal (Peru)	163
49. Universidad Catolica (Chile)	162
54. Millonarios (Colombia)	154
60. Sao Paulo (Brazil)	149
64. Cruz Azul (Mexico)	142
67. Lanus (Argentina)	139
68. Deportivo Cali (Colombia)	139
71. America (Colombia)	138
77. Independiente (Argentina)	135
80. Bolivar (Bolivia)	134
84. Boca Juniors (Argentina)	130
86. Nacional (Uruguay)	127
87. Tolima (Colombia)	127

Italian Affair

By Joe Russo

LA MOVIOLA

Being a referee in Italy's Serie A is surely one of the world's most thankless tasks. It is truly an epidemic that in post-match interviews coaches blame the referees for something.

They all do it — Capello, Lippi, Ancelotti, Eriksson, Zaccaroni, Simoni etc.

To put things into perspective let us realise that referees are only humans and therefore they will make mistakes. Also the Serie A referees are not full-time professionals and they earn only a fraction of what the leading coaches do.

Simply put, the referee is easy to blame — very rarely are they ever interviewed by television and radio after games. They basically do not get a chance to reply to the criticism levelled at them.

Sunday night television in Italy is dominated by a number of football shows, where each game is discussed and analysed, coaches and players are interviewed and a whole range of 'experts', from former coaches, players, referees and officials, make up discussion panels.

You can stay up to the early hours of Monday morning and still find some program discussing the previous afternoon's Serie A games.

The poor old referee is on a hiding to nothing. Adding to the saturation coverage on television, you will find that the Monday edition of Italy's three sports daily newspapers, 'La Gazzetta dello Sport', 'Il Corriere dello Sport' and 'Tuttosport' are almost entirely dedicated to the weekend soccer.

So if the referee missed his criticism by a



coach on television the previous night, he can certainly read about it the next day!

One of the leading Sunday night football programs makes use of what is called 'La Moviola' — the slow motion replay of each game's controversial incidents, such as disputed penalties and off-sides.

They are discussed of course in great detail and you guessed it, the man in the middle is rarely spared. 'La Moviola' is as much part of the Serie A as is Juventus, Inter, AC Milan etc.

It is interesting to note that this year the man who presses the button on 'La Moviola' to actually roll the video tape is a former leading referee, Carlo Longhi. In his new capacity as television analyst he has basically turned on his former colleagues. And Longhi is no stranger to fans of Australian soccer.

He handled the 1989 game between Australia and Israel which ended in a 1-1 draw at the SFS, resulting in Australia being eliminated from the next round of World Cup qualifying games. Longhi, by allowing no stoppage time after 90 minutes, effectively cut the game short by four minutes.

He is certainly not on Frank Arok's Christmas card list!

So just who are the Serie A's leading whistle blowers and what do they do?

Pierluigi Collina, unmistakable because of his completely shaved head, is a financial consultant. He is regarded as one of the world's leading referees.

Joining Collina in this category is Pierluigi Pairetto. He handled the Australia v Iran clash in Tehran recently, he is also a qualified vet.

Other leading referees are: Robert Boggi, born in the USA, works in finance, Stefano Braschi, a real estate agent, Piero Ceccarini, a financial consultant, Graziano Cesari, a businessman and Alfredo Trentalange, who works for the Health Department.

For their refereeing they earn the equivalent of about A\$40,000 per year. Much much less than players, coaches, officials and journalists who criticise them!

JULY BEST TIME

It is not since June 1993, when AC Milan came to Australia for four days for two games against the Socceroos (one in Sydney, one in Melbourne), that a Serie A team has visited our shores.

A few months ago there was talk of Inter being interested in an end of season trip this year, but nothing more seems to have come of it.

Of course, fans in Australia have been disappointed in the past when leading European clubs used Australia as an end of year holiday destination, and games played here were treated with contempt.

Further, it would cost an absolute fortune to bring any team at the end of a season to Australia.

Well let me suggest an alternative. Most Serie A teams start to prepare for the new season in July — right in the middle of Europe's summer.

Consequently teams are taken away in camp to mountain resorts, say in Switzerland and Northern Italy where it is cooler to train.

Most clubs themselves actually pay for this and it is also a time where they are looking for friendly games in which they can experiment with their new season's squad.

Now surely Australia could capitalise here. Our mild winter, excellent facilities at a number of venues, wide open spaces etc. would surely provide the ideal environment for any team's pre-season training camp.

What a wonderful opportunity as well for our clubs and possibly even the locally based Socceroos to provide the friendly games these clubs are looking for.

Both sides could only benefit and I'm sure spectators would love it.

Australis is not too far away. A 24 hour plane trip for professional coaches and players would be seen as only a small sacrifice to make, in order to gain pre-season training, friendly games and all with excellent facilities.

Remember also that clubs take their pre-season training seriously and are prepared to pay for it. Now this surely beats the end-of-season 'holiday'!



Italy
1905



Roberto Baggio: Will be very keen to impress against his former team mates.

Roberto Baggio plays against his former club Juventus as Bologna take on Juve this weekend. In other matches this weekend:

FIXTURES FOR SERIE A

Atalanta — Udinese
Fiorentina — Lazio
Inter — Bari
Lecce — Sampdoria
Napoli — Brescia
Parma — Milan
Roma — Piacenza
Vicenza — Empoli



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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY — JANUARY 13, 1998

UK STORIES

Compiled by Micky Brock

WRIGHT'S BENFICA BONANZA

Ian Wright, Arsenal's England striker, is ready to make a dream move to Portuguese giants Benfica.

The 34-year-old club-record scorer wants one last career move to set him up for life — and new Benfica boss Graeme Souness has launched a bid to land the Highbury hero.

Wright, who has two full seasons left on his current contract, scored in the 2-1 Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final win at West Ham, but has become disillusioned with a section of Arsenal fans who think he is past his best.

Souness is ready to offer a four-year contract worth up to \$12 million if Arsenal reward Wright's loyal service by asking only a nominal fee.

Only recently Wright angrily engaged supporters from the Highbury dressing room window after the home defeat by Blackburn — and that was the signal for him that he might have overstayed his North London welcome.

The controversial striker, who earlier this season became Arsenal's record scorer when eclipsing Cliff Bastin's record, would love a crack at the Continental game before it is too late, and Souness can't wait to indulge him.

Souness is already feeling pressure in Lisbon, going down last weekend 2-0 to old enemies Porto and losing Portuguese forward Joao Pinto with a serious injury.

A big name, like Wright, would impress the success starved Benfica fans.

Souness, who was in the UK over the Christmas period, was alerted to the possibility of Wright wanting to move on and is poised to make an offer that can't be refused. I understand he is ready to give Wright a four-year contract worth up to \$12 million if Arsenal play fair with the former Crystal Palace forward and give him a free transfer, or ask only a nominal fee after the great service he has given them.

If Wright did get his dream move, Benfica is such a big club that it wouldn't harm Wright's chances of making a late run for Glenn Hoddle's England squad in the World Cup Finals.

Although Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger will find it hard to give Wright his release, at least he knows that by the player heading abroad he wouldn't be around to hurt the Gunners' trophy chances.

The wrench has to come some time and it would give Wenger the chance to bring in a top-class replacement who has a few more years on the clock.

Rumours abound that the Gunners are eyeing Robbie Fowler of Liverpool, as he is thought to have greatly impressed Frenchman Arsene Wenger in matches against Arsenal, however, the London club strongly deny that Wright is going anywhere and have issued a 'hands off' warning to Souness.



Robbie Fowler: Rumours abound that the Scouse striker will play at Highbury ... in an Arsenal shirt.

DINO TO STAY A BLADE

Brian Deane is being offered a long-term deal by Sheffield United in a bid to stop a \$4 million gamble backfiring on the First Division promotion hopefuls.

United are facing a fight to keep Deane just six months after he rejoined them from Leeds for \$2 million.

The striker will earn a similar amount this season as the club's top earner but the fact that he signed only a one-year deal means he could move for nothing under the Bosman ruling.



Deane, United's 13-goal top scorer, has so far refused to commit himself beyond next summer when he would be likely to go unless a Premiership place has been clinched.

Effectively, he represents a high-risk investment by a club desperate for promotion.

Manager Nigel Spackman said: "Brian is happy here and we'd love to sort out a longer-term agreement with him."

On the other side of town, Jack Marshall, former Sheffield Wednesday manager, has died, aged 80. He coached Wednesday in the mid-fifties and managed them in the 1968/9 season. He also managed Rochdale, Blackburn and Bury.

R.I.P.

COVENTRY IN EUROPE

German champions Bayern Munich will play Coventry in a friendly at Highfield Road on January 27. It is a warm-up match before the German League restarts after its winter break.

IT'S A PROMISE!

Swindon manager Steve McMahon has transfer-listed eight players following his side's FA Cup humiliation by Stevenage.

Defenders Phil King, Frederic Darras and Gary Elkins, midfielders Alex Smith, Peter Holcroft and Michael Pattimore and young striker Alex Finlayson have all been given free transfers, while ex-Newcastle defender Jason Drysdale is available for a small fee.

Swindon have slumped from the top of the First Division to mid-table in six weeks and the 2-1 cup defeat was the last straw for McMahon.

He said: "I was very disappointed with what I saw over the weekend and I feel this is the best way of going about things. Attitudes have got to be right both on and off the pitch and that was not the case with some players."

"If players don't give 100 per cent in the future then they will also be on their way. This is not a threat, it's a promise."

FERGIE CHASES JANSEN

Manchester United have joined the scramble to sign Carlisle's rising star Matt Jansen.

Old Trafford manager Alex Ferguson was impressed by favourable scouting reports on the 20-year-old striker and wants the Cumbrians to allow Jansen to spend a week training with the Premiership champions.

Derby have already taken the England Under-19 international under a similar arrangement while West Ham had a \$2.5 million bid rejected recently by the Second Division strugglers.

United would also be up against Newcastle and Liverpool in the chase for the youngster.

Carlisle chairman Michael Knighton, who tried to buy United ten years ago, has put a \$5 million price tag on his star striker, who has risen through the ranks and made his debut last season.

Having built a formidable youth

set-up at Old Trafford it is rare for Ferguson to bring in youngsters from outside.

LONDONERS IN FINAL

The three heroes of Chelsea's penalty shoot-out victory at Ipswich greeted the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final against Arsenal with quiet confidence.

All three believed that a crucial factor could be the staging of the second-leg at Stamford Bridge.

"We are pleased with the draw and looking forward to the game," said captain Dennis Wise, whose return to midfield after a two-match suspension gave Chelsea much-needed bite and edge.

"The fact that we are away first is good for us. We prefer it that way," he added.

Goalkeeper Ed De Goey, whose two saves in the shoot-out proved to be match-winners, echoed the sentiment.

"It is much better that we are home in the second game. I think it is good that we drew Arsenal."

And Mark Hughes, who came on as a substitute in extra-time and scored the conclusive penalty in the shoot-out, said: "It is a big game for the club, we all know that."

"Sometimes it is an advantage to play the away leg first."

SAINTS TRIAL SWEDE

Southampton manager Dave Jones is giving a week's trial to 26-year-old Cologne midfielder Christer Furst, capped four times by Sweden.

Jones wants to increase his squad after Birmingham-bound Simon Charlton became the 11th player to be sold since the former Stockport boss became manager of Saints last summer.

PALACE IN LOAN DEAL

Tommy Johnson edged towards a Celtic exit when Crystal Palace took the former Notts County, Derby and Aston Villa striker on loan.



Alex Ferguson: I want Matt Jansen!



Mark Hughes: "Sometimes it is an advantage to play the away leg first."

Celtic general manager Jack Brown had been hawking Johnson around the Premiership in an attempt to recoup the \$4.5 million paid for him at the end of last season.

Palace boss Steve Coppell has stepped in with a three-month deal as he tries to keep the Londoners clear of the relegation zone.

McCOIST MOVE ON HOLD

Rangers striker Ally McCoist's hopes of a move to help his World Cup prospects could be delayed after his Ibrox team-mate Sebastian Rozenal broke down in training.

McCoist, a peripheral figure this season, was told he could leave Ibrox on a loan deal in the New Year in order to remain part of Scotland manager Craig Brown's plans for France 98.



Rangers boss Walter Smith always maintained that any deal —

with a host of English sides including Everton and Birmingham interested — would depend on him having sufficient cover for the 35-year-old player.

But Rozenal's latest setback casts major doubts over McCoist's immediate future again.

The 21-year-old Chilean striker has played only 58 minutes of first-team football since arriving at Ibrox a year ago in a \$8 million deal from Universidad Catolica.

He was expected to return to action later this month after completing an intensive rehabilitation program subsequent to knee surgery.

But now Rangers are flying in the South American surgeon, who operated on Rozenal, to assess the latest damage, after the player was reported to be suffering pain in his knee.

Ibrox boss Smith had high hopes of linking Rozenal with Italian scoring sensation Marco Negri as he attempts to guide the club to a record tenth successive Premier Division title.

STARK RETURN

Greenock Morton manager Billy Stark will make an emotional return to Parkhead in the third round of the Tennents Scottish Cup on January 24.

Stark was assistant to Celtic manager Tommy Burns at this stage of the competition last year, but a shock semi-final defeat by Falkirk hastened the departure of both men from the Glasgow club.

While Burns moved on to a plum coaching role at Kenny Dalglish's Newcastle, Stark dipped his toes into the murky waters of the Scottish First Division.

Morton are struggling at the foot of the table, but Stark, three months into the job, is optimistic he can turn things around.

He noted: "I'm delighted to be going back to Parkhead, because if nothing else it will be a financial boost for our club."

"I have good memories of my time there — and fairly recent ones at that. I wasn't surprised we were drawn against them, because football has a habit of throwing up this kind of match."

"It is an occasion to be savoured both for the players and the supporters. Playing at the big stadiums is surely what it is all about."

"Celtic are a formidable team, who don't concede many goals, while we are struggling in the First Division."



Weird & Wonderful

By Stuart Jones



1949 — 1950

So a decade of pain closed. For Portsmouth it would open with yet another title, however it was a very, very close thing.

Wolves ended equal on points with Sunderland, just one behind, and a loss below them came Man Utd and Newcastle Utd. In fact, the five points they finished clear in the last campaign actually separated the top eight teams this time around.

Two victories, especially their 5-1 effort over Aston Villa in May, kept them top, despite Wolves' 6-1 win on the last day of the season. With both the teams above them victorious, Sunderland's 4-1 win over Chelsea was not enough. At the bottom Manchester City and Birmingham City (victims of that Wolves win on the final day) finished well back in the field and were relegated.

Top spot in Division Two was much clearer as Spurs ended nine points ahead of the rest. The fight for the second promotion spot was much tighter with both Sheffield clubs and Southampton equal on 52 points.

On April 29 Sheffield United defeated Hull City 5-0, at Boothferry Park, to end their campaign. Southampton played a game on May 6 and won 3-2, not enough to push United out of second. Wednesday had a much tougher ask on May 6 — they had to gain a point from Tottenham, albeit at home.

A tough defensive battle saw a 0-0 scoreline and, against the odds, Wednesday went up in second spot, consigning their rivals to another season outside the top flight (in fact it ended up being a further three seasons). At the bottom, Plymouth and Bradford Park Avenue were relegated.

Doncaster were top of Division Three North with Notts County champions of the South (T Lawton scoring 31 of County's 95 goals). York and Millwall were bottom of their respective divisions.

The FA Cup saw Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Everton make the semi-finals. After a 2-2 draw, Arsenal defeated Chelsea 1-0 in the replay. In the Merseyside derby, Liverpool came out on top 2-0.

With an attendance of over 100,000 at Wembley it was Arsenal who lifted the cup thanks to two goals from Lewis. In that team were both of the Compton brothers, stars in English football and cricket.

The full teams: **ARSENAL:** Swindin, Scott, Barnes, Forbes, L.Compton, Mercer, Cox, Logie, Goring, Lewis, D. Compton.

LIVERPOOL: Sidlow, Lambert, Spicer, Taylor, Hughes, Jones, Payne, Barron, Stubbins, Fagan, Liddell.

A record 24 clubs made up the Southern League in England/Wales and Colchester dominated the title race in all but the most important weekend.

As Merthyr Tydfil had a superior goal difference, United had to win at Barry, while Merthyr had to win at home to Bedford. The second part of the equation came to fruition with Tydfil winning 5-1.

For Colchester it was all a disaster as they drew 0-0, thus having the title snatched from their hands on inferior goal average. In 46 games the Welsh club had scored 143 goals and conceded only 62.

Chingford, in comparison, ended bottom, scoring just 61 goals in their 46 games and conceding 151! Colchester did make the Cup Final for the Southern Division and won 3-0 in the first leg at Bath City's Twerton Park. The home game ended 4-1 to Bath City and thus extra-time was played.

Colchester recovered from this shock and with goals from Keeble and Hillman took the Cup 6-4 on aggregate.

In Scotland, the surprise winners of the League were ... Rangers (well not really that much of a surprise).

Hibernian were runners-up with Edinburgh rivals Hearts third. It could have been very different had Rangers not drawn 2-2 with Third Lanark on the final day of the season. This was their game in hand and had they not gained a point the title would have been heading to south east Scotland, and not the major western city.

At the bottom Queen of South and Stirling Albion finished eight points behind the field — Albion's remarkable rise through Scottish football temporarily over.

Morton and Airdrie were to be promoted in their place (Morton as champions of Division Two). Alloa ended up bottom of the League.

Rangers defeated East Fife 3-0 in the Scottish FA Cup Final played at Hampden Park on April 22, 1950, however they defeated Rangers 2-1 in the semi-finals of the League Cup.

In the League Cup Final East Fife scored three unanswered goals against Dunfermline (who had defeated none other than Hibernian in the semis) to win the trophy, the second time they had done so in their four year existence.

ENGLAND LEAGUE TABLES

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
P'mouth	42	12	7	2	44	15	10	2	9	30	23	53
Wolves	42	11	8	2	47	21	9	5	7	29	28	53
Sun'land	42	14	6	1	50	23	7	4	10	33	39	52
Man Utd	42	11	5	5	42	20	7	9	5	27	24	50
Newcastle	42	14	4	3	49	23	5	8	8	28	32	50
Arsenal	42	12	4	5	48	24	7	7	7	31	31	49
B'pool	42	10	8	3	29	14	7	7	7	17	21	49
L'pool	42	10	7	4	37	23	7	7	7	27	31	48
Mid'boro	42	14	2	5	37	18	6	5	10	22	30	47
Burnley	42	9	7	5	23	17	7	6	8	17	23	45
Derby	42	11	5	5	46	26	6	5	10	23	35	44
A Villa	42	10	7	4	31	19	5	5	11	30	42	42
Chelsea	42	7	7	7	31	30	5	9	7	27	35	40
WBA	42	9	7	5	28	16	5	5	11	19	37	40
Hud'field	42	11	4	6	34	22	3	5	13	18	51	37
Bolton	42	10	5	6	34	22	0	9	12	11	37	34
Fulham	42	8	6	7	24	19	2	8	11	17	35	34
Everton	42	6	8	7	24	20	4	6	11	18	46	34
Stoke	42	10	4	7	27	28	1	8	12	18	47	34
Charlton	42	7	5	9	33	35	6	1	14	20	30	32
Man City	42	7	8	6	27	24	1	5	15	9	44	29
B'ham	42	6	8	7	19	24	1	6	14	13	43	28

DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tot'ham	42	15	3	3	51	15	12	4	5	30	20	61
Sheff Wed	42	12	7	2	46	23	6	9	6	21	25	52
Sheff Utd	42	9	10	2	36	19	10	4	7	32	30	52
Soton	42	13	4	4	44	25	6	10	5	20	23	52
Leeds Utd	42	11	8	2	33	16	6	5	10	21	29	47
Preston NE	42	12	5	4	37	21	6	4	11	23	28	45
Hull City	42	11	8	2	39	25	6	3	12	25	47	45
Swansea	42	11	3	7	34	18	6	6	9	19	31	43
Brentford	42	11	5	5	21	12	4	8	9	23	37	43
Cardiff	42	13	3	5	28	14	3	7	11	13	30	42
Grimsby	42	13	5	3	53	25	3	3	15	21	48	40
Coventry	42	8	6	7	32	24	5	7	9	23	31	39
Barnsley	42	11	6	4	45	28	2	7	12	19	39	39
Chest'fld	42	12	3	6	28	16	3	6	12	15	31	39
Leicester	42	8	9	4	30	25	4	6	11	25	40	39
B'burn	42	10	5	6	30	15	4	5	12	25	45	38
Luton	42	8	9	4	28	22	2	9	10	13	29	38
Bury	42	10	8	3	37	19	4	1	16	23	46	37
West Ham	42	8	7	6	30	25	4	5	12	23	36	36
QPR	42	6	5	10	21	30	5	7	9	19	27	34
Plymouth	42	6	6	9	19	24	2	10	9	25	41	32
Bradford	42	7	6	8	34	34	3	5	13	17	43	31

DIVISION THREE NORTH

Doncaster Rovers 55, Gateshead 53, Rochdale 51, Lincoln City 51, Tranmere Rovers 49, Rotherham United 48, Crewe Alexandra 48, Mansfield Town 48, Carlisle United 47, Stockport county 45, Oldham Athletic 43, Chester 40, Accrington Stanley 39, New Brighton 38, Barrow 37, Southport 37, Darlington 35, Hartlepool United 33, Bradford City 32, Wrexham 32, Halifax Town 32, York City 31.

DIVISION THREE SOUTH

Notts County 58, Northampton Town 51, Southend United 51, Nottingham Forest 49, Torquay United 48, Watford 45, Crystal Palace 44, Brighton & Hove Albion 44, Bristol Rovers 43, Reading 42, Norwich City 42, Bournemouth 42, Port Vale 41, Swindon Town 41, Bristol City 40, Exeter City 39, Ipswich Town 35, Leyton Orient 35, Walsall 34, Aldershot 34, Newport County 34, Millwall 32.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Merthyr Tydfil 71, Colchester United 71, Yeovil Town 65, Chelmsford City 61, Gillingham 55, Dartford 49, Worcester City 49, Guildford City 47, Weymouth 47, Barry Town 46, Exeter City Res 46, Lovells Athletic 44, Tonbridge 44, Hastings United 42, Gravesend and Northfleet 41, Torquay United Res 40, Bath City 39, Gloucester City 39, Hereford United 38, Cheltenham Town 37, Headington United 37, Bedford Town 35, Kidderminster Harriers 35, Chingford Town 26.



SCOTLAND

DIVISION A

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	30	22	6	2	58	26	50
Hibernian	30	22	5	3	86	34	49
Hearts	30	20	3	7	86	40	43
East Fife	30	15	7	8	58	43	37
Celtic	30	14	7	9	51	50	35
Dundee	30	12	7	11	49	46	31
Partick T	30	13	3	14	55	45	29
Aberdeen	30	11	4	15	48	56	26
Raith R	30	9	8	13	45	54	26
Motherwell	30	10	5	15	53	58	25
St Mirren	30	8	9	13	42	49	25
T Lanark	30	11	3	16	44	62	25
Clyde	30	10	4	16	56	73	24
Falkirk	30	7	10	13	48	72	24
Q South	30	5	6	19	31	63	16
Stirling A	30	6	3	21	38	77	15

DIVISION B

Greenock Morton 47, Airdrieonians 44, Dunfermline Athletic 36, St Johnstone 36, Cowdenbeath 35, Hamilton A 34, Dundee United 33, Kilmarnock 33, Queen's Park 31, Forfar Athletic 30, Albion rovers 27, Stenhousemuir 24, Ayr United 22, Arbroath 19, Dumbarton 16, Alloa Athletic 13.



Around Europe the Champions were:

Austria: FK Austria

Belgium: RSC Anderlecht

Bulgaria: Dinamo Sofia (Cup - Dinamo Sofia)

France: Girondins Bordeaux (Cup - Stade Rennais)

East Germany: East Horch Zwickau (Cup - EHW Thale)

West Germany: West VfB Stuttgart

Holland: Limburg Brunssue (Cup - PSV Eindhoven)

Italy: Juventus FC

Poland: Gwardia Krakow

Portugal: Benfica

Romania: Flamura Rosie (Cup - CCA Bucuresti)

Russia: CDKA Moskva (Cup - Spartak Moskva)

Spain: Club Atletico De Madrid (Cup - Club Atletico De Bilbao)

Sweden: Malmo FF (Cup - AIK Stockholm)

Switzerland: Servette FC Geneve (Cup - Lausanne-Sports)



WORLD STOP PRESS

ZELIC RETURNS TO GERMANY

Bundesliga side 1860 Munich said they had agreed to sign Australian international Ned Zelic from French club Auxerre.

Zelic, who has had spells in Germany before with Borussia Dortmund and Eintracht Frankfurt, was expected to sign a deal tying him to the club until the end of the 1999-2000 season.

1860 coach Werner Lorant said the versatile Zelic would fill a central midfield role.

Media reports put the transfer fee for Zelic at around \$440,000.



Ned Zelic: Aussie Soccer's journeyman has returned to Germany

BURKINA FASO BEAT

MOZAMBIQUE

African Nations' Cup hosts Burkina Faso defeated Mozambique 4-2 in a warm-up game ahead of next month's tournament.

All the goals came in the second half. Ismael Koudou opened the scoring for the home side in the 55th minute and added his second 11 minutes later.

Lassane Ouedraogo and Brahim Traore both scored to put Burkina Faso 4-0 up before Enrico John and Bernardo Koumbe hit late goals for Mozambique.

The victory, the second over Mozambique in less than a week, marks an upturn in the home side's fortunes under their interim coach, Frenchman Philippe Troussier.

Troussier, sacked by Nigeria after steering them to this year's World Cup Finals, takes over as South Africa's World Cup coach in March after his contract with Burkina Faso expires.

Mozambique were beaten 1-0 by Burkina Faso after earlier defeating neighbouring Ivory Coast 2-0 in another friendly.

NANTES REMOVE FENCES

Nantes will remove perimeter fencing at their Stade de La Beaujoire for the World Cup Finals, leaving the tournament almost fence-free.

The city authorities announced the decision after a meeting with security officials and said in a statement the costs of removal will be met by the World Cup organising committee, CFO.

"It was decided because the program of matches to be played in Nantes presents no danger, in principle, on a security level," the mayor's sports aide Michel Cordier said.

Nantes will stage six World Cup matches, five in the first round including Spain versus Nigeria in Group D and holders Brazil's meeting with Morocco in Group A, plus a quarter-final.

The decision leaves only one of the World Cup venues, St Etienne, maintaining perimeter fencing, although only because of financial difficulties.

Nantes' decision suggests impoverished former French giants St Etienne, now languishing in the Second Division, could also receive CFO aid to enable the June 10 to July 12 tournament to be completely 'fence-free'.

The CFO announced in November that the other eight World Cup stadiums would not have perimeter fencing, which FIFA opposes, during the tournament.

The other venues are the Stade de France at St Denis outside Paris and the Parc des Princes in the capital, plus stadiums in Lens, Lyon, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Marseille and Toulouse.

KAREMBEU CLEARED

One of soccer's longest-running transfer sagas finally came to an end this week as Sampdoria's French international Christian Karembu passed his Real Madrid medical and was given the all-clear to play for the Spanish champions.

The 27 year-old midfielder was presented to the media when he formally signed a contract.

The transfer was confirmed by Real Madrid on December 30 after an 18 month battle by Karembu to be released by his Italian club.

He is tied to Real until the end of the 2001/2002 season and officials at the Spanish club have said the transfer fee is 500 million pesetas (\$3.33 million).

The amount is relatively low for a player of Karembu's stature, but he would have been out-of-contract at Sampdoria at the end of the term and, under the Bosman ruling, he could have left without a fee being paid.

Karembu is expected to make his debut against Salamanca in front of a supportive home crowd next week rather than in the tense atmosphere of the local derby at Atletico.

He has not played for Sampdoria this season after the club suspended him over his attempt to move to Spain, however in October he played at Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium in an anti-racism exhibition match.

LICENCE WARNING

Karel van Miert, European commissioner for competition, is to send a letter to FIFA warning them that their system of handing out agents' licenses could contravene the European Union's treaty.

Willy Helin, a spokesman for van Miert, said that there had been several complaints from agents, particularly from Denmark, over the compulsory payment of 200,000 Swiss francs (\$130,000) to register as an official agent.

The commissioner will emphasise in his letter that FIFA's stance contradicts the clause in the EU treaty which forbids governing authorities from abusing their power.

ENGLAND-GERMANY NO GO

FIFA ruled out any joint hosting of the 2006 World Cup Finals by England and Germany.

The federation made it clear the 2002 Finals in South Korea and Japan was a

special case not to be repeated.

Speculation mounted after Germany's bid chief Franz Beckenbauer said his country would not oppose sharing the 2006 finals with England.

The two nations have launched campaigns that threaten to turn into a costly and damaging rivalry before a decision is made in 2000.

"Both England and Germany have good claims and there is no point in them making a bid together," said FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper, speaking at the Football Expo '98 fair in Singapore.

"As far as FIFA is concerned it is not an option as Japan and South Korea was a one-off.

"We are between the devil and the deep blue sea. We are not considering it but if another finals was co-hosted it would mean that every World Cup is co-hosted."

Beckenbauer had predicted FIFA would oppose such a move because of the "problems" faced in Japan and South Korea.

FIFA decided the two would host the first finals in Asia because of the animosity that built up between them in their bidding campaign.

NORWAY FINALISE FRIENDLIES

Norway — who have been drawn in Group A with champions Brazil, Morocco and Scotland — will play France in Marseille on February 28, Belgium in an as yet to be announced venue on March 25, Denmark on April 22, probably in Copenhagen, and Tunisia on either May 27 or 28, at home in Molde.

The Scandinavians, who have qualified for their second successive World Cup Finals, have also arranged two training camps in England for their players who play abroad — the first in Blackburn on January 11-12 and another in February.

PSG SIGN WORN

The 1996 Cup Winners' Cup champions Paris Saint Germain signed German international defender Christian Worn from Bayer Leverkusen on a 'free' under the Bosman ruling as his contract expires at the end of the season.

25-year-old Worn, who has played for Leverkusen since 1991 when he joined from Waldhof Mannheim, signed a three year contract and will join the French giants at the end of the season, despite an improved offer from the Bundesliga club.

"I tried everything, but Christian decided to leave and that was final," Bayer manager Reiner Calmund said.

Bayer, who are currently fourth in the championship 11 points behind leaders Kaiserslautern, at least will have Worn available for their European Cup quarter-final with Real Madrid in March — PSG, however, were knocked out in the group stages.

HITZFELD QUILTS DORTMUND

Ottmar Hitzfeld, who led Borussia Dortmund to last year's European Cup title, is to stand down as director of football at the end of the current Bundesliga season, the German news agency SID reported.

At 48 he has been in charge of the Bundesliga club for seven years and last month led them to victory in the World Club Championship.

He coached the team before taking the job as director of football during the close season, while Italian Nevio Scala took over as coach.

Hitzfeld made his announcement in Barcelona, where Borussia will face 'Barca' in the first leg of the European Super Cup on Thursday.

"I see myself as more of a coach than a

manager and it's 99 percent certain that I'll return to coaching," Hitzfeld said.

"I've had seven fantastic years with Dortmund. It's been like a fairytale."

He recently rejected an offer to take over as Swiss national coach.

REFEREES CAN TALK

Referees will be allowed to answer back at critics of their decisions in this year's World Cup, a top FIFA official stated.

Farouk Bouzo, chairman of the international governing body's referees' committee, said "there is a lot more pressure on referees in most countries. The time has come for them to be allowed to explain their actions."

He said the higher stakes in soccer meant there was too much "unfair criticism" of referees by the media and the public and that match officials had asked for the right to comment.

"People must understand that there is such a thing as human error and sometimes we must learn from mistakes. It is easy for people sitting in their chairs to criticise. We must let referees defend themselves and give their side."

Bouzo said his recommendation to lift the gagging order should be approved by the FIFA congress just before the World Cup in France, so match officials could start giving their own press conferences for the Finals.

Referees have never been allowed to speak publicly after matches by the soccer authorities, while incidents such as Geoff Hurst's disputed goal for England against Germany in the 1966 World Cup Final and Diego Maradona's notorious fisted 'Hand of God' goal for Argentina against England in the 1986 World Cup seriously tarnished the profession's reputation.

Only this week in England, referee Steve Dunn set off another storm by ruling out an injury-time winner by blowing for full time in the split second between Wimbledon's Neil Ardley's corner and Marcus Gayle's header into the Wrexham net.

Dunn refused to speak to journalists and even angered Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear by not talking to him after the match.

Welsh referee Clive Thomas, who took a similar decision at the 1978 World Cup Finals, cancelling a Zico goal and leaving Brazil held to a 1-1 draw by Sweden, was delighted by the controversy.

"I have been waiting 20 years for someone else to do that. Twenty years I have been praying, every Cup tie," he told British radio.

The FIFA referee committee chief said 90 percent of criticism of match referees was not fair.

"In the case of the 'Hand of God' goal you can perhaps criticise the positioning of the referee and his assistant," was his only comment on Maradona's goal.

Bouzo dismissed suggestions of using an 'off pitch' referee armed with video replay as there is in cricket and some other sports.

"You cannot have separate systems for countries that could afford such a development and those that cannot. You would need 16 cameras around the field and it would take too long to get a decision. It is not going to happen in the foreseeable future."

1998 RESOLUTIONS SAMBA STYLE

Rio de Janeiro's leading clubs have begun the year in traditional manner by threatening to boycott the local championship.

The row (which has almost become part of the Christmas and New Year celebrations in Brazil) inevitably blows up in the first

week of January, drags on until Carnival in February and then peters out with both parties claiming a moral victory.

On the one side, as usual, are Flamengo, Botafogo and Fluminense. On the other, the Rio de Janeiro football federation, whose president is nicknamed 'The Water Tank.'

He admits he has only stayed in office to annoy his opponents.

As usual, the rebels are unhappy with the way the competition is being organised. This time, they are angry because the federation wants to start the championship in mid-January.

The rebels claim to possess a document signed last year by federation president Eduardo Viana which agrees that it will only start in early March, once another competition involving clubs from Rio and Sao Paulo has finished.

The presidents of the rebel clubs met and vowed not to take part unless Viana gave in to their demands. Viana met presidents of Brazil's other state federations and swore he would not give in.

The competition, popularly known as the 'Carioca', is one of the most traditional tournaments in Brazil, which uniquely, among major soccer nations, devotes the first half of the year to regional contests — one for each of its 27 states.

But in the last few years, the rebels have become increasingly frustrated at the organisation.

They are unhappy with the almost incomprehensible formats used and the fact that nearly all the other teams are of an infinitely lower standard.

Viana, whose nickname is widely used even though its origins are well-kept secret, is pilloried by the media but gives the impression that he enjoys the conflict.

Last year the rebel clubs actually boycotted the first month of the championship and only took part after the federation made adjustments to the rules which, in fact, turned out to be merely cosmetic.

This time, the dispute threatens to go one step further.

"Last year, I made conciliations. This year, I want to see who is stronger," said Viana.

He claimed that if the rebels refused to play in his championship, they would be suspended by the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), making them ineligible for both national and international competitions.

BOLI RETIRES

Central defender Basile Boli, whose headed goal won Olympique Marseille the European Cup in 1993, has been forced to retire because of a head injury he suffered two years ago.

"It was in Japan, when I signed for Urawa Reds in 1996, that the extent of my difficulties was revealed," Boli said in the latest edition of France Football magazine.

"I have head troubles every day. I wake up every morning and it's as if I'd been covered in lead," the 31-year-old defender said.

Boli's problems started after a violent collision with his goalkeeper during a UEFA Cup match between Monaco and Leeds United late in 1995.

Boli, capped 45 times for France, began his career at AJ Auxerre. After winning two French league championships with Marseille, he joined Glasgow Rangers, adding a Scottish Premier Division title in 1995.

He left for Japan after a brief spell with Monaco, but after a good first season he played few games last year.

Boli's goal in the 1993 European Cup Final against AC Milan sealed the first ever victory by a French club in one of the three senior European competitions.

Born in Adjame on the outskirts of Abidjan, Boli plans to retire to the Ivory Coast.



WORLD STOP PRESS

ARMY THE WINNERS?

Ukrainian striker Igor Nischenko has failed to report back to his Hungarian club Ferencvaros after a trip home, prompting speculation he has been conscripted to the Ukraine army.

The daily Nepszava newspaper reported the Ukrainian authorities had apprehended 26-year-old Nischenko as he renewed his passport in Kiev.

It added that the Ukrainian police had been attempting to contact the player for two years.

Nischenko's agent, Sergei Kuznetsov, told the daily Nemzeti Sport he believed the player had probably been conscripted.

"We have heard the news but we have yet to have it officially confirmed," Laszlo Gal, technical director of Ferencvaros told Reuters.

"Igor had a problem with his work permit here and went back to Ukraine to sort out his passport."

Should Nischenko, one of the most prolific scorers in Hungary during the past three seasons, fail to return it would be a major blow to Ferencvaros' title hopes. At the winter break they are fifth, seven points behind leaders Gyor ETO.

Two years military service is compulsory in Ukraine for all adult males under the age of 28.

THREE BANNED FOR DRUGS

French First Division players Vincent Guerin, Antoine Sibierski and Dominique Arribage were suspended for six months for failing drugs tests.

The trio were given further 12 months suspended sentences by the anti-doping commission of the French Football Federation.

The three all returned positive tests for the anabolic steroid Nandrolone when tested after French league games.

Guerin, who plays for Paris Saint Germain, Sibierski, for Auxerre, and Arribage, who is with Toulouse, all said they plan to appeal against the decision.

Under French Federation rules, the players have 15 days in which to lodge their reasons for appeal.

"This is my future at stake, my integrity and my career," said Guerin, while Arribage felt the ban was too harsh.

"It's very tough," he said. "I've been condemned to death for a crime I didn't commit."

WYNALDA KNOCKS BACK

KAISERSLAUTERN

American international Eric Wynalda has turned down an offer from Kaiserslautern, the German First Division leaders said.

Kaiserslautern hoped to persuade the 28-year-old striker to return to the Bundesliga after he had spells with FC Saarbrücken in 1992-93 and VfL Bochum in 1994-95.

But Wynalda, currently with Californian side San Jose, told the German club he wanted to concentrate on preparing for this year's World Cup Finals in France.

The United States have been drawn in the same opening group as Germany, Iran and Yugoslavia.

EMERSON RAISES INTEREST

Two Italian clubs have entered the race to sign Middlesbrough's out-of-favour Brazilian star Emerson, Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson has revealed.

The English First Division club's talented midfielder player has been linked with Tenerife for several weeks but Robson confirmed the Spanish side are now facing competition from Italy for Emerson's signature.

He said: "I am not prepared to name the Italian clubs at this stage, but they are in Serie A."

Tenerife, though, have moved closer to agreement over a fee after renewed talks and Emerson could be given permission to talk to the Spanish First Division club over the weekend. Emerson angered Robson with his late return from a pre-Christmas break and it seems inevitable the former Portuguese 'Player of the Year' has worn a Middlesbrough shirt for the last time.

LIPPI TO FANS

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi hit back after facing a hail of insults, coins and plastic bottles from Fiorentina fans during an ill-tempered Italian Cup tie.

The quarter-final first leg finished 2-2, but there was drama after defender Alessandro Birindelli was sent-off for a second bookable offence and Lippi was given a red-card for protesting.

The missiles and insults rained down as Lippi made his way towards the changing rooms, similar to the rocks that had showered onto Juventus' team bus when the Turin club went there for a league fixture last February.

"They shouted all the insults they could think of — but then, there's nothing new in that," Lippi lamented.

"They were rude about my mother, the poor woman, who is from Florence. But I do think they could leave my father alone, he died six years ago."

"On the other hand, what else can you expect when you have to arrive at the stadium escorted by ten police vans, a helicopter hovering overhead and who knows how many policemen on motorbikes and horses."

"Otherwise they'll start throwing lumps of rock at you, like they did last year, when they wrecked the team bus."

For that particular cup tie, both teams arrived at the ground at the same time, in identical coaches with reflective glass in the windows which prevented the fans outside from identifying those inside.

Aside from the incident with the crowd, though, Lippi also regretted his ironic protest at the referee's decision to dismiss Birindelli.

"I raised my finger at the referee as if to say 'OK', well done, congratulations. It was a mistake. But then mistakes happen to players, to referees and they also happen to coaches."

"But I'd just like to say two things," he added. "I didn't say anything offensive to the referee and when (Stefan) Schwarz applauded him after being booked, he didn't get sent-off."

The away draw makes Juventus favourites to reach the semi-finals, where they would probably face Lazio, 4-1 winners of the first-leg of their capital derby with AS Roma.

SIMPLE

FOOTBALL WINS

Football must stay simple and not change to suit big business if it is to remain the world's most popular sport in the next millennium, experts have said.

"Keep it simple. If the football side is not right than the business side will also suffer," said Bobby Charlton.

Franz Beckenbauer, Charlton's German opponent in the 1966 World Cup Final won by England, agreed the rules of the game should not be made more complicated.

Speaking at the Football Expo '98, the sport's first global trade show, he cited the offside directive where the referee has to determine whether a player in an offside position is interfering with play.

"It is complicated. Keep the game simple," said Beckenbauer, who won the World Cup in 1974 with West Germany and is now president of Bayern Munich.

He said other changes, such as three points for a win and banning of back passes to the goalkeeper, had been good for the game.

But Alan Rothenberg, President of the U.S. Soccer Federation, said officials must continue to study, evaluate and make revolutionary changes if necessary to retain football's popularity.

Rothenberg argued that drastic changes, such as basketball's time clock which stops when play stops, are sometimes needed to boost popularity.

"With the explosion of communications and television, we cannot forget that we are in the entertainment business. We must be careful that we are not too conservative," he observed.

The partnership between football and sponsors was discussed with general agreement that the two sides should not interfere in each other's business.

"The reason they (companies) get into the game is because they like the game. The don't want to change the game," said Andre Gorgemans, General Secretary of the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry.

Concern over direct interference in the game by major corporate sponsors was raised by a recent contract between sportswear firm Nike and the Brazilian Football Confederation, which required Brazil to play a certain number of games in a year.

Charlton said that this would put a lot of strain on the players who would have to travel widely and might end up playing too many matches for both club and country.

He said his club Manchester United would think carefully before signing any Brazilian since the player might be "unavailable for a third of the season."

But Gorgemans said it was not in the interests of sponsors to interfere in the running of the game.

"To say the company (Nike) is trying to rule the game is far fetched. They are trying to get into football," he said.

Gorgemans said one survey showed that companies had invested \$400-550 million in the sponsorship of football.

The panel of experts said a big challenge for football in the next millennium was to tempt youngsters out of the house and away from computers and television.

SOVIET GREAT DIES

Former Soviet international striker Slava Metreveli, part of the Russian squad that won the 1961 European Championship, died last Thursday at the age of 61 after a long illness.

Metreveli, who played for their international side from 1959-1970, started his professional career with Torpedo Moscow in 1956, moving onto Dynamo Tbilisi in 1963 where he played until the end of his career in 1972.

Metreveli, who played in three World Cup Finals tournaments, was chosen several times for the FIFA and UEFA international teams.

'CRAZY GANG' MEMBERS GROWING

English Premiership side Wimbledon, commonly known as the 'Crazy Gang', added a new member to their cast with the signing of experienced striker Carl Leaburn from First Division Charlton Athletic for \$600,000.

The 28-year-old Leaburn, who has been less than prolific in his ten years at Charlton with his best season producing 11 goals in 39 matches in 1991-92, will add vital cover to Wimbledon's strike-force as they are missing the injured duo of Nigerian Efan Ekoku and Irish international Jon Goodman.

Charlton managing director Peter Varney said: "Carl has been out of contract for 19 months and has today got the Premiership move that he has wanted."

"He would have been a free agent in June and as such the club would not have received a fee for him," Varney added.

PHONE-IN

DECIDES CLUB?

Brazilian midfielder Marcelinho Carioca has been bought by the Sao Paulo Football Federation, who will organise a phone-in to decide which club he plays for.

A Sao Paulo Federation spokesman said that fans from local clubs Palmeiras, Corinthians and Sao Paulo would be invited to call a premium rate phone number.

Whichever club gets the most calls will enjoy the services of Marcelinho for the next six months, with his wages paid by the Federation.

Marcelinho was signed from Spanish club Valencia, where he spent an unhappy six months warming the substitutes' bench. Media reports put the fee at around seven million dollars.

He joined Valencia from Corinthians, where he attained idol status during a three-year spell in which he scored more than 100 goals, some of them stunning.

Corinthians are favourites to gain Marcelinho, as they have by far the biggest support in Sao Paulo.

The phone-in started on Saturday and continues for two weeks. Asked which club he would prefer to join, Marcelinho simply laughed and declined to comment.

The Sao Paulo Federation has made a big attempt to keep its championship growing in the face of growing criticism in Brazil of the state championship system.

Unique among major soccer nations, Brazil devotes the first half of the year to regional competitions, with one for each of the country's 27 states. Each state also has its own federation.

Sao Paulo Federation president Eduardo Farah frequently boasts that his organisation runs the most lucrative and successful soccer operation in the country.

Since last year, the federation have been guaranteeing clubs a fixed income from their matches in the competition, with the amount varying according to the size of the club.

In contrast, Rio de Janeiro's leading clubs are threatening to boycott their state championship in a long-running feud with the Rio federation.

Last year, the clubs boycotted the opening stage of the championship, forcing a cosmetic change in the format.

PLAYERS ON GRASS?

Punishing match schedules and the need for clubs to squeeze every drop of revenue from their facilities are making pure grass soccer pitches a thing of the past.

"Grass is really changing because of the

need to cope with much higher usage demands," said Chris Clapham, chief executive of British sports surface technology firm En-tout-cas (ETC).

ETC, exhibiting at the Football Expo '98 trade show in Singapore, has won a contract to fit Manchester United's Old Trafford ground with its StrathAyr root-strengthening synthetic mesh system.

Clapham declined to reveal the value of the contract but said stadium-size systems would cost about \$700,000.

English league champions United have experimented with turf reinforcement for the past two seasons in the Old Trafford goalmouths and the entire pitch will be reinforced in the 1998 close season, Clapham said.

His system uses natural turf with a mesh-reinforced sand base in which roots entwine themselves, stopping divots being gouged out during matches.

Manchester United follow fellow English Premier League clubs Chelsea and Aston Villa, which switched to a competing system, Grassmaster, in 1997.

"You can play three to four times as much on a Grassmaster pitch than on an ordinary pitch and it has exactly the same characteristics as normal grass. Players don't know they're playing on it," said Ronald Benning of Dutch makers Desso DLW Sports Systems.

Grassmaster punches fibres into a sand base at 2cm intervals, leaving 1.5cm above the surface to give a 97% natural and 3% artificial pitch.

The technology has been used on 40 pitches worldwide, 30 in the Netherlands, and the others in Europe including the national soccer stadiums in Norway and Denmark.

The number of pitches using synthetic strengthening is set to grow as clubs search for non-soccer revenue such as rock concerts or ground sharing deals with other clubs and other sports.

"Clubs are increasingly interested in the non-football revenue that a technology like this can bring in. It has multi-use and multi-sport applications," Clapham added.

Fully synthetic surfaces are also making a comeback in the quest for the ultimate damage-proof, weather-proof pitch.

John Gilman, president of Canada's SynTenniCo Inc, which makes the completely synthetic FieldTurf, says, "artificial turf got a bad name because it was a lousy playing surface."

He says his firm has now got the formula right. "During the last eight years, we've gone through a complete evolution to get to pitch quality. We've got something that looks like, feels like and plays like grass," Gilman said.

Artificial pitches gives at least ten times more usage than strengthened surfaces said Gilman, a former American football player who has installed his system at Middlesbrough Football Club's training ground.

"We're just waiting for official documentation from FIFA that it will allow artificial surfaces for everything but international games," he said.

"When we get that we'll really get going."

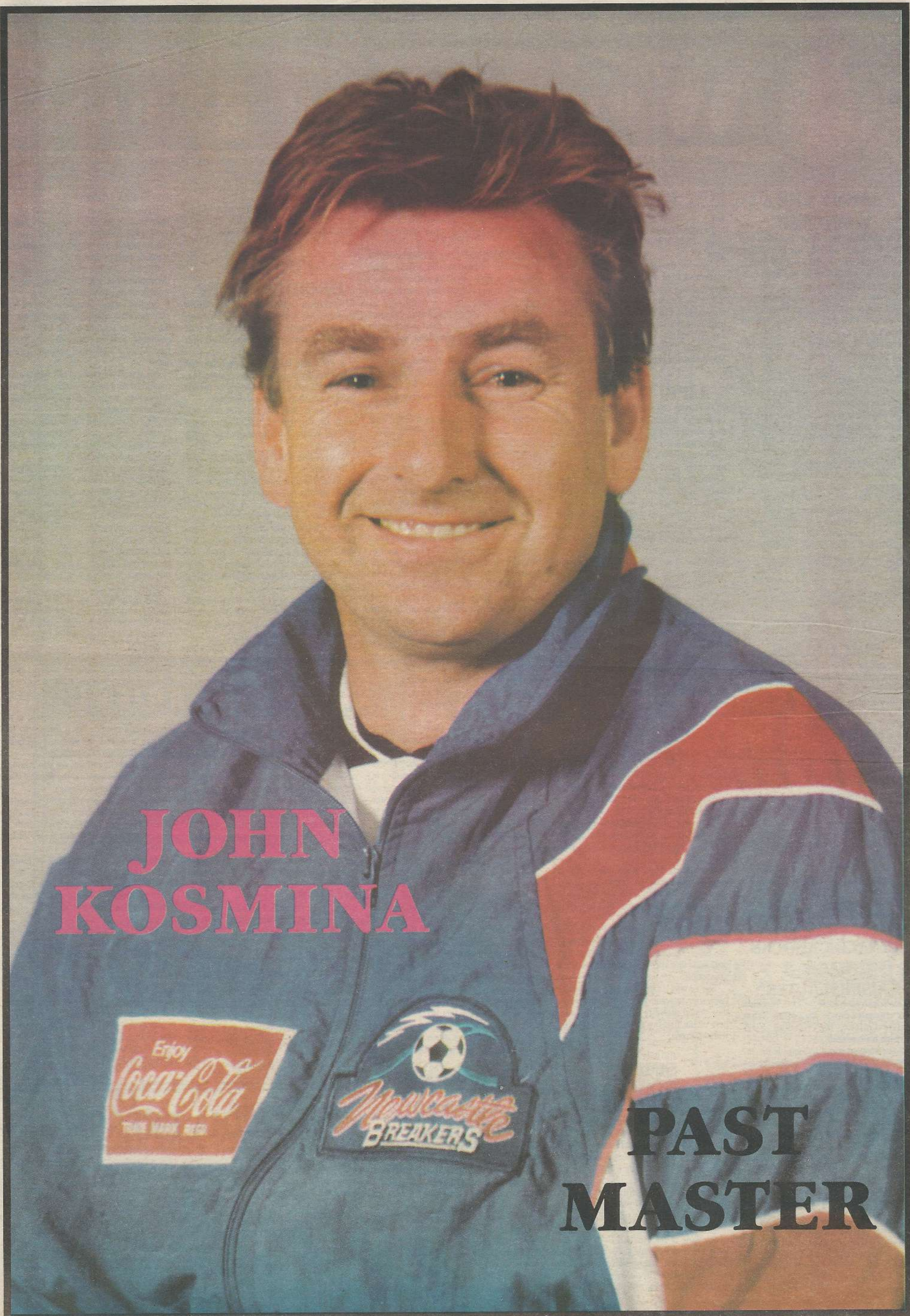


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A color portrait of a man with short, reddish-brown hair, smiling. He is wearing a blue quilted jacket with red and white stripes on the sleeves. The jacket has two patches: a Coca-Cola patch on the left chest and a Newcastle Breakers patch on the right chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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